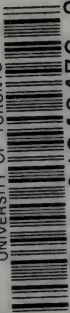


UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



3 1761 01643476 3



45

I

B E L L ' s

BRITISH THEATRE.

VOLUME THE NINETEENTH.

THE HISTORY OF THE
 REFORMATION



1555

By Thomas Murner, M.A. of the University of Oxford.
 1555

Bell's

BRITISH THEATRE;

COMEDIES.



L O N D O N .

Printed for John Bell near Exeter Exchange in the
STRAND.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
LIBRARY
1215 EAST 58TH STREET
CHICAGO, ILL. 60637

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
LIBRARY
1215 EAST 58TH STREET
CHICAGO, ILL. 60637

E.C.
8626
780

B E L L ' s

BRITISH THEATRE,

Consisting of the most esteemed

ENGLISH PLAYS.

VOLUME THE NINETEENTH.

Being the Tenth VOLUME of COMEDIES.

CONTAINING

VOLPONE, altered from BEN JONSON.

COUNTRY LASSES, by Mr. C. JOHNSON.

MISTAKE, by Sir JOHN VANBRUGH.

GAMESTERS, as altered from SHIRLEY.

The LADY'S LAST STAKE, by COLLEY CIBBER,
Esq.

232808
30.5.29

L O N D O N :

Printed for JOHN BELL, at the British Library, Strand.

M DCC LXXX.

E. L. A. 13

ARTIST'S TIME

1883

1884

1885

1886

1887

1888

1889

1890

1891





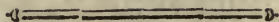
J. Roberts del.

Subsidia for Bell's British Theatre Oct. 16th 1777.

J. Ellard Sculp.

*MR. HULL in the Character of VOLTAIRE.
would to heaven
I could as well give health to you as to this Plate.*

BELL'S EDITION.



VOLPONE;

OR, THE

F O X.

A COMEDY,

As altered from BEN JONSON,

AND PERFORMED AT THE

Theatre-Royal in Covent-Garden.

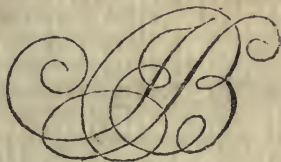
Regulated from the Prompt-Book,

By PERMISSION of the MANAGERS,

By Mr. WILD, Prompter.

Simul & jucunda, & idonea dicere vitæ.

HORAT.



L O N D O N :

Printed for JOHN BELL, near Exeter-Exchange, in the Strand.

MDCCCLXXVIII.



PR

2622

A1

1778

THE ARGUMENT.

V olpone, childless, rich, feigns sick, despairs,
 O ffers his 'state to hopes of several heirs;
 L ies languishing; his parasite receives
 P resents of all; assures, deludes, then weaves
 O ther cross plots, which op' themselves, are told.
 N ew tricks for safety are sought; they thrive: when bold
 E ach tempts the other again, and all are sold.

P R O L O G U E.

N OW luck yet send us, and a little wit
 Will serve to make our play hit;
 (According to the palates of the season)
 Here is rhyme, not empty of reason.
 This we were bid to credit, from our poet,
 Whose true scope, if you would know it,
 In all his poems still hath been this measure,
 To mix profit with your pleasure;
 And not as some (whose throats their envy failing)
 Cry hoarsely, All he writes is railing:
 And when his plays come forth, think they can flout them,
 With saying, He was a year about them.
 To these there needs no lie, but this his creature,
 Which was two months since no feature;
 And though he dares give them five lives to mend it,
 'Tis known, five weeks fully penn'd it;
 From his own hand, without a coadjutor,
 Nowice, journeymen, or tutor.
 Yet thus much I can give you, as a token
 Of his play's worth, no eggs are broken,
 Nor quaking custards with fierce teeth affrighted,
 Wherewith your rout are so delighted;
 Nor hauls he in a gull, old ends reciting,
 To stop gaps in his loose writing;
 With such a deal of monstrous and forc'd action,
 As might make Bethl'em a faction:
 Nor made he his play for jests stol'n from each table,
 But makes jests to fit his fable;

*And so presents quick comedy refined,
 As best critics have designed.
 The laws of time, place, persons, he observeth,
 From no needful rule he severeth:
 All gall and copp'ras from his ink he draineth,
 Only a little salt remaineth,
 Wherewith he'll rub your cheeks, till (red with laughter)
 They shall look fresh a week after.*

D R A M A T I S P E R S O N Æ.

M E N.

		<i>Covent-Garden.</i>
<i>Volpone, a magnifico,</i>	—	Mr. Smith.
<i>Mosca, his parasite,</i>	—	Mr. Bensley.
<i>Voltore, an advocate,</i>	—	Mr. Hull.
<i>Corbaccio, an old gentleman,</i>		Mr. Shuter.
<i>Corvino, a merchant,</i>	—	Mr. Clarke.
		Mr. Morris.
<i>Avvocatori, magistrates,</i>		Mr. Cushing.
		Mr. Thompson.
<i>Notario, the register,</i>	—	Mr. Bates.
<i>Nano, a dwarf,</i>	—	Mr. Jones.
<i>Castrene, an eunuch,</i>	—	Mr. Blurton.
<i>Politick Would-be, a knight,</i>		Mr. Kniveton.
<i>Peregrine, a gentleman traveller,</i>		Mr. Owenfon.
<i>Bonario, a young gentleman,</i>		Mr. Wroughton.
<i>Commandadori, officers.</i>		
<i>Mercatori, three merchants,</i>		
<i>Androgyno, an hermaphrodite,</i>		
<i>Servitore, a servant,</i>		

W O M E N.

<i>Lady Would-be, the knight's wife,</i>	Mrs. Gardner.
<i>Celia, the merchant's wife,</i>	Miss Miller.

S C E N E, V E N I C E.

V O L P O N E.

* * * The lines marked with inverted commas, 'thus,' are omitted in the representation.

A C T I.

Enter Volpone and Mosca.

VOLPONE.

GOOD morning to the day ; and next my gold ;
 ' Open the shrine, that I may see my saint.'
 Hail the world's soul and mine !

' More glad than is

' The teeming earth to see the long'd-for sun

' Peep through the horns of the celestial Ram,

' Am I, to view thy splendor, dark'ning his ;'

That lying here, amongst my other hoards,
 Shew'ft like a flame by night, or like the day
 Struck out of chaos, when all darkness fled

Unto the centre. ' Oh, thou son of Sol,

' (But brighter than thy father) let me kiss,

' With adoration, thee, and every relick

' Of sacred treasure in this blessed room.'

Well did wise poets by thy glorious name,

Title that age which they would have the best ;

' Thou being the best of things ; and far transcending

' All style of joy, in children, parents, friends,

' Or any other waking dream on earth.'

Thy looks, when they to Venus did ascribe,

They should have given her twenty thousand Cupids ;

Such are thy beauties and our loves ! Dear saint,

' Riches the dumb god, that giv'ft all men tongues ;

' That canst do naught, and yet mak'ft men do all things ;

' The price of souls ; even hell, with thee to boot,

' Is

'Is made worth heav'n.' Thou art virtue, fame,
Honour, and all things else. Who can get thee,
He shall be noble, valiant, honest, wise——

Mos. And what he will, Sir. Riches are in fortune
A greater good, than wisdom is in nature.

Vol. True, my beloved *Mosca*. Yet I glory
More in the cunning purchase of my wealth,
Than in the glad possession, since I gain
No common way; I use no trade, no venture;
'I wound no earth with plow-shares; I fat no beast
'To feed the shambles; have no mills for iron,
'Oil, corn, or men, to grind them into powder;
'I blow no subtil glass, expose no ships
'To threatnings of the furrow-faced sea;'
I turn no monies in the public bank,
Nor usure private.

Mos. No, Sir, nor devour
Soft prodigals. You shall ha' some will swallow
A melting heir as glibly as your Dutch
Will pills of butter, 'and ne'er purge for't;
'Tear forth the fathers of poor families
'Out of their beds, and coffin them alive
'In some kind clasping prison, where their bones
'May be forth-coming, when the flesh is rotten:'
But your sweet nature doth abhor these courses;
You loath the widow's or the orphan's tears
Should wash your pavements, or their piteous cries
Ring in your roofs, and beat the air for vengeance.

Vol. Right, *Mosca*. I do loath it.

Mos. And besides, Sir,
You are not like a thresher that doth stand
With a huge flail, watching a heap of corn,
And, hungry, dares not taste the smallest grain,
'But feeds on mallows, and such bitter herbs;
'Nor like the merchant, who hath fill'd his vaults
'With Romagna, and rich Canadian wines,
'Yet drinks the lees of Lombards vinegar:
'You will not lie in straw, while moths and worms
'Feed on your sumptuous hangings and soft beds,'
You know the use of riches, and dare give now
From that bright heap, to me your poor observer,
Or to your dwarf, or your hermaphrodite,

VOLPONE.

Your eunuch, or what other household trifle
Your pleasure allows maintenance——

Vol. Hold thee, Mosca,
Take of my hand; thou strik'st on truth in all,
And they are envious term thee parasite.
Call forth my dwarf, my eunuch, and my fool,
And let them make me sport. What should I do,
But cocker up my genius, and live free
To all delights my fortune calls me to?
I have no wife, no parent, child, ally,
To give my substance to; but whom I make
Must be my heir; and this makes men observe me;
This draws new clients daily to my house,
'Women and men, of every sex and age,'
That bring me presents, send me plate, coin, jewels,
With hope that when I die (which they expect
Each greedy minute) it shall then return
Ten-fold upon them; 'whilst some, covetous
'Above the rest, see to engross me whole,
'And counter-work the one unto the other,
'Contend in gifts, as they would seem in love:'
All which I suffer, playing with their hopes,
And am content to coin them into profit,
'And look upon their kindness, and take more,
'And look on that; still bearing them in hand,'
Letting the cherry knock against their lips,
And draw it by their mouths and back again. 'How now!'

A D A N C E.

' *Enter Nano, Androgyno, and Castrone.*

' *Nan.* Now room for fresh gamesters, who do will
you to know,
' They do bring you neither play, nor university show;
' And therefore do intreat you, that whatsoever they re-
hearse,
' May not fare a whit the worse, for the false pace of
the verse.
' If you wonder at this, you will wonder more e'er we pass,
' For know, here is inclos'd the soul of Pythagoras,
' That juggler divine, as hereafter shall follow;
' Which soul (fast and loose, Sir) came first from Apollo,
' And

- ‘ And was breath’d into Æthalides, Mercurius’s son,
 ‘ Where it had the gift to remember all that ever was done.
 ‘ From thence it fled forth, and made quick transmigration,
 ‘ To goldy-lock’d Euphorbus, who was kill’d in good
 fashion,
 ‘ At the siege of old Troy, by the cuckold of Sparta.
 ‘ Hermotimus was next, (I find it in my charta)
 ‘ To whom it did pass, where no sooner it was missing,
 ‘ But with one Pyrrhus of Delos it learn’d to go a fishing;
 ‘ And thence did it enter the sophist of Greece.
 ‘ From Pythagore, she went into a beautiful piece,
 ‘ Hight Aspatia the Meretrix; and the next tofs of her
 ‘ Was again of a whore, she became a philosopher,
 ‘ Crates the Cynic (as itself doth relate it)
 ‘ Since kings, knights and beggars, knaves, lords and
 fools gat it,
 ‘ Besides ox and ass, camel, mule, goat and brock,
 ‘ In all which it hath spoke, as in the cobbler’s cock.
 ‘ But I come not here to discourse of that matter,
 ‘ Or his one, two, or three, or his great oath, By Quater,
 ‘ His musics, his trigon, his golden thigh,
 ‘ Or his telling how elements shift; but I
 ‘ Would ask, how of late thou hast suffer’d translation,
 ‘ And shifted thy coat in these days of reformation?
 ‘ *And.* Like one of the reform’d, a fool, as you see,
 ‘ Counting all old doctrine heresy.
 ‘ *Nan.* But not on thine own forbid meats hast thou
 ventur’d?
 ‘ *And.* On fish, when first a Carthusian I enter’d.
 ‘ *Nan.* Why, then thy dogmatical silence hath left thee?
 ‘ *And.* Of that an obstreperous lawyer bereft me.
 ‘ *Nan.* Oh, wonderful change! When Sir Lawyer
 forsook thee,
 ‘ For Pythagore’s sake, what body then took thee?
 ‘ *And.* A good dull moyl.
 ‘ *Nan.* ———And how! by that means
 ‘ Thou wert brought to allow of the eating of beans?
 ‘ *And.* Yes.
 ‘ *Nan.* But from the moyl into whom didst thou pass?
 ‘ *And.* Into a very strange beast, by some writers call’d
 an ass;

‘ By

- ' By others, a precise, pure, illuminate brother,
- ' Of those devour flesh, and sometimes one another;
- ' And will drop you forth a libel, or a sanctify'd lie,
- ' Betwixt every spoonful of a nativity-pie.
- ' *Nan.* Now quit thee, for heav'n, of that profane nation,
- ' And gently report thy next transmigration.
- ' *And.* To the same that I am.
- ' *Nan.* ——— A creature of delight?
- ' And (what is more than a fool) an hermaphrodite?
- ' Now, pr'ythee, sweet soul, in all thy variation,
- ' Which body would'st thou choose, to keep up thy station?
- ' *And.* Troth, this I am in; even here would I tarry.
- ' *Nan.* Cause here the delight of each sex thou can'st vary?
- ' *And.* Alas, those pleasures be stale and forsaken;
- ' No, 'tis your fool wherewith I am so taken,
- ' The only one creature that I can call blessed;
- ' For all other forms I have prov'd most distressed.
- ' *Nan.* Spoke true, as thou wert in Pythagoras still,
- ' This learned opinion we celebrate will,
- ' Fellow eunuch (it behoves us) with all our wit and art,
- ' To dignify that whereof ourselves are so great and special a part.'

Vol. Now, very, very pretty. Mosca, this
Was thy invention?

Mos. If it please my patron,
Not else.

Vol. It doth, good Mosca.

Mos. Then it was, Sir.

SONG.

- ' Fools they are the only nation
- ' Worth men's envy or admiration;
- ' Free from care or sorrow-taking,
- ' Selves and others merry making;
- ' All they speak or do is sterling.
- ' Your fool he is your great man's darling,
- ' And your ladies sport and pleasure;
- ' Tongue and babble are his treasure.

' E'en

' E'en his face begetteth laughter,
 ' And he speaks truth free from slaughter;
 ' He's the grace of every feast;
 ' And sometimes the chiefest guest;
 ' Hath his trencher and his stool,
 ' When wit waits upon the fool.
 ' Oh, who would not be
 ' He, he, he?'

One knocks without.

Vol. Who's that? Away; look, Mosca.

Mos. ' Fool, begone; ' 'tis Signior Voltore the advocate,
 I know him by his knock.

[Exeunt Nano, Androgyno, and Castrone.]

Vol. Fetch me my gown,
 My furs, and night-caps; say, my couch's changing;
 And let him entertain himself a while
 Without i'th' gallery. *[Exit Mos.]* Now, now, my clients
 Begin their visitation! Vulture, kite,
 Raven, gorgon, all my birds of prey,
 That think me turning carcass, now they come:
 I am not for them yet.

Enter Mosca.

How now? the news?

Mos. A piece of plate, Sir.

Vol. Of what bigness?

Mos. Huge,

Massy, and antique, with your name inscrib'd,
 And arms engraven.

Vol. Good! and not a fox
 Stretch'd on the earth, with fine delusive sleights,
 Mocking a gaping crow? Ha! Mosca.

Mos. Sharp, Sir.

Vol. Give me my furs. Why dost thou laugh so, man?

Mos. I cannot choose, Sir, when I apprehend
 What thoughts he has (without) now, as he walks:
 That this might be the last gift he should give;
 That this would fetch you; if you died to-day,
 And gave him all, what he should be to-morrow;
 What large return would come of all his ventures;
 How he should worshipp'd be, and reverenc'd;
 Ride with his furs and foot-clothes; waited on
 By herds of fools and clients; ' have clear way

' Made

'Made for his moile, as letter'd as himself;'
Be call'd the great and learned advocate :
And then concludes, there's nought impossible.

Vol. Yes, to be learned, Mosca.

Mos. Oh, no ; rich

Implies it. Hood an ass with reverend purple,
So, you can hide his too ambitious ears,
And he shall pass for a cathedral doctor.

Volp. My caps, my caps, good Mosca ; fetch him in.

Mos. Stay, Sir, your ointment for your eyes.

Vol. That's true ;

Dispatch, dispatch ; I long to have possession
Of my new present.

Mos. That, and thousands more,
I hope to see you lord of.

Vol. Thanks, kind Mosca.

Mos. And that, when I am lost in blended dust,
An hundred such as I am, in succession——

Vol. Nay, that were too much, Mosca.

Mos. You shall live,
Still to delude these harpies.]

Vol. Loving Mosca,

'Tis well, my pillow now, and let him enter.
Now, my feign'd cough, my phthisic, and my gout,
My apoplexy, palsy, and catarrhs,
Help with your forced functions, this my posture,
Wherein, this three year, I have milked their hopes.
He comes, I fear him (uh, uh, uh, uh) Oh !

Enter Voltore.

Mos. You still are what you were, Sir. Only you
(Of all the rest) are he, commands his love :
And you do wisely, to preserve it thus,
With early visitation, and kind notes
Of your good meaning to him, which, I know,
Cannot but come most grateful. Patron, Sir,
Here's Signior Voltore is come.

Vol. What say you ?

Mos. Sir, Signior Voltore is come, this morning,
To visit you.

Vol. I thank him.

Mos. And hath brought

A piece of plate, bought of St. Mark,
With which he here presents you.

Vol. He is welcome.

Pray him to come more often.

Mos. Yes.

Volt. What says he?

Mos. He thanks you, and desires you see him often.

Volp. Mosca.

Mos. My patron?

Volp. Bring him near, where is he?

I long to feel his hand.

Mos. The plate is here, Sir.

Volt. How fare you, Sir?

Volp. I thank you, Signior Voltore.

Where is the plate? mine eyes are bad.

Volt. I'm sorry,

To see you still thus weak.

Mos. That he is not weaker.

Volp. You are too munificent.

Volt. No, Sir; would to heav'n

I could as well give health to you, as that plate.

Volp. You give, Sir, what you can. I thank you.

Your love

Hath taste in this, and shall not be unanswer'd.

I pray you, see me often.

Volt. Yes, I shall, Sir.

Volp. Be not far from me.

Mos. Do you observe that, Sir?

Volp. Hearken unto me still: it will concern you.

Mos. You are a happy man, Sir, know your good.

Volp. I cannot now last long—

Mos. You are his heir, Sir.

Volt. Am I?

Volp. I feel me going, (uh, uh, uh, uh.)

I am failing to my port, (uh, uh, uh, uh.)

And I am glad, I am so near my haven.

Mos. Alas, kind gentlemen! Well, we must all go—

Volp. But, Mosca.

Mos. Age will conquer.

Volt. Pray thee, hear me.

Am I inscrib'd his heir for certain?

Mos. Are you?

I do beseech you, Sir, you will vouchsafe
To write me i' your family. All my hopes,
Depend upon your worship. I am lost,
Except the rising sun do shine on me.

Volt. It shall both shine, and warm thee, Mosca.

Mos. Sir,

I am a man, that hath not done your love
All the worst offices; here I wear your keys,
See all your coffers, and your caskets lock'd,
Keep the poor inventory of your jewels,
Your plate and monies; I'm your steward, Sir,
Husband your goods here.

Volt. But am I sole heir?

Mos. Without a partner, Sir, confirm'd this morning;
The wax is warm yet, and the ink scarce dry
Upon the parchment.

Volt. Happy, happy, me!

But what good chance, sweet Mosca?

Mos. Your desert, Sir;

I know no second cause.

Volt. Thy modesty

Is loth to know it; well, we shall requite it.

Mos. He ever lik'd your course, Sir; that first took
I oft have heard him say, how he admir'd, [him;
Men of your large profession, that could speak
To every cause, and things mere contraries,
Till they were hoarse again, yet all be law;
That with most quick agility, could turn,
And return; 'make knots and undo them;
'Give forked counsel;' take provoking gold
On either hand, and put it up: 'these men,
'He knew, would thrive, with their humility;
'And (for his part) he thought, he should be blest
'To have his heir of such a suffering spirit,'
So wise, so grave, of so perplex'd a tongue,
And loud withal, that could not wag, nor scarce
Lie still, without a fee; when every word
Your worship but lets fall, is a chequin.

[*Another knock.*]

Who's that? one knocks, I would not have you seen, Sir.
And yet—pretend you came, and went in haste;
To fashion an excuse. And, gentle Sir,

B

When

When you do come to swim in golden lard,
Up to the arm in honey, that your chin
Is borne up stiff with fatness of the flood,
'Think on your vassal ; but remember me ;
I ha' not been your worst of clients.

Volt. Mosca——

Mos. When will you have your inventory brought, Sir?
Or see a copy of the will ! ' Anon'
I'll bring them to you, Sir. Away, begone,
Put business i' your face. [*Exit Voltore.*]

Volp. Excellent Mosca !

' Come hither, let me kiss thee.'

Corv. [*Calls within.*] Mosca !

Mos. Close to your couch again. I hear his voice.
It is Corvino, our spruce merchant.

Volp. Dead.

Corv. [*Within.*] Mosca !

Mos. ' Another bout, Sir, with your eyes.' Who's there?

Enter Corvino.

Mos. Signior Corvino ! Come most wish'd for ! Oh,
How happy were you, if you knew it, now !

Corv. Why ? What ? Wherein ?

Mos. The tardy hour is come, Sir.

Corv. He is not dead ?

Mos. Not dead, Sir, but as good ;
He knows no man.

Corv. How shall I do then ?

Mos. Why, Sir ?

Corv. I have brought him here a pearl.

Mos. Perhaps he has

So much remembrance left as to know you, Sir ;
He still calls on you ; nothing but your name
Is in his mouth. Is your pearl orient, Sir ?

Corv. Venice was never owner of the like.

Volp. Signior Corvino.

Mos. Hark !

Volp. Signior Corvino.

Mos. He calls you ; step and give it him. ' He's here, Sir,
' And he has brought you a rich pearl.'

Corv. How do you, Sir ?

Tell him, it doubles the twelfth carat.

Mos.

Mos. Sir,
He cannot understand ; his hearing's gone ;
And yet it comforts him to see you.

Corv. Say,
I have a diamond for him too.

Mos. Best shew't, Sir ;
Put it into his hand ; 'tis only there
He apprehends ; he has his feeling yet.
See how he grasps it !

Corv. 'Las, good gentleman !
How pitiful the sight is !

Mos. Tut ! forget, Sir.
The weeping of an heir should still be laughter,
Under a visor.

Corv. Why, am I his heir ?

Mos. Sir, I am sworn ; I may not shew the will,
Till he be dead. But
Here has been Voltore, here were others too ;
I cannot number them, they were so many,
All gaping here for legacies ; but I,
Taking the 'vantage of his naming you,
(Signior Corvino, Signior Corvino) took
Paper and pen and ink, and there I ask'd him
Whom he would have his heir ? Corvino. Who
Should be executor ? Corvino. And
To any question he was silent to,
I still interpreted the nods he made
(Thro' weakness) for consent ; and sent home th' others,
Nothing bequeath'd them, but to cry, and curse.

Corv. Oh, my dear Mosca !—Does he not perceive us ?
[*They embrace.*]

Mos. No more than a blind harper. He knows no man,
No face of friend, nor name of any servant,
Who 'twas that fed him last, or gave him drink ;
Not those he hath begotten or brought up
Can he remember.

Corv. Has he children ?

Mos. Bastards,
Some dozen or more, that he begot on beggars,
Gypsies and jews, and Black-a-moors, when he was drunk ;
' Knew you not that, Sir ? 'Tis the common fable.'
The dwarf, the fool, the eunuch, are all his ;

H' is the true father of his family,
In all, save me. But he has given them nothing.

Corv. That's well, that's well! Art sure he does not
hear us?

Mos. Sure, Sir! Why, look you, credit your own sense.
The plague approach, and add to your diseases,
If it would send you hence the sooner, Sir,
'For your incontinence; it hath deserv'd it
'Thoroughly, and thoroughly, and the pox to boot.'
(You may come near, Sir) Would you would once close
Those filthy eyes of yours, 'that flow with slime,
'Like two frog pits;' and those same hanging cheeks,
Cover'd with hide, instead of skin, (Nay help, Sir)
That look like frozen dish-clouts set on end.

Corv. Or like an old smoak'd wall, on which the rain
Ran down in streaks.

Mos. Excellent, Sir! speak out;
You may be louder yet. A culverin,
Discharged in his ear, would hardly bore it.

'*Corv.* His nose is like a common sewer, still running.

'*Mos.* 'Tis good!' And what his mouth?

Corv. A very draught.

Mos. Oh, stop it up!

Corv. By no means.

Mos. Pray you, let me.

Faith, I could stifle him rarely with a pillow,
As well as any woman that should keep him.

Corv. Do as you will; but I'll begone.

Mos. Be so;

It is your presence makes him last so long.

Corv. I pray you, use no violence.

'*Mos.* No, Sir! Why?

Why should you be thus scrupulous? Pray you, Sir.

Corv. Nay, at your discretion.

Mos. Well, good Sir, begone.

Corv. I will not trouble him now, to take my pearl.

Mos. Puh! nor your diamond. 'What a needless care
'Is this afflicts you?' Is not all here yours?
Am not I here, whom you have made your creature,
That owe my being to you?

Corv. Grateful Mosca!

Thou

Thou art my friend, my fellow, my companion,
My partner, and shalt share in all my fortunes.

Mos. Excepting one.

Corv. What's that?

Mos. Your gallant wife, Sir. [Exit Corvino.]
Now he is gone. We had no other means
To shoot him hence, but this.

Volp. My divine *Mosca*!

Thou hast to-day out-gone thyself. Who's there?

[Another knocks.]

Mos. 'Tis Corbaccio.

Betake you to your silence, and your sleep.

'Stand there, and multiply.' Now shall we see

A wretch who is, indeed, more impotent

Than this can feign to be; yet hopes to hop

Over his grave.

Enter Corbaccio.

Signior Corbaccio!

You're very welcome, Sir.

Corb. How does your patron?

Mos. Troth, as he did, Sir; no amends.

Corb. What! mends he?

Mos. No, Sir; he is rather worse.

Corb. That's well. Where is he?

Mos. Upon his couch, Sir, newly fall'n to sleep.

Corb. Does he sleep well?

Mos. No wink, Sir, all this night,
Nor yesterday; but slumbers.

Corb. Good! He shall take
Some counsel of physicians. I have brought him
An opiate here, from mine own doctor——

Mos. He will not hear of drugs.

Corb. Why, I myself

Stood by while 'twas made, saw all th' ingredients,

'And know it cannot but most gently work.'

My life for his, 'tis but to make him sleep.

Volp. Ay, his last sleep, if he would take it. [Aside.]

Mos. Sir,

He has no faith in physick.

Corb. 'Say you? 'Say you?

Mos. He has no faith in physic. He does think
Most of your doctors are the greater danger,

And the worse disease, t' escape. I often have
Heard him protest, that your physician
Should never be his heir.

Corb. Not I his heir !

Mos. Not your physician, Sir.

Corb. Oh, no, no, no !

I do not mean it.

Mos. No, Sir ; nor their fees
He cannot brook ; he says they slay a man,
Before they kill him.

Corb. Right ; I do conceive you.

Mos. And then, they do it by authority ;
For which the law not only doth absolve them,
But gives them great reward : and he is loth
To hire his death so.

Corb. It is true, they kill
With as much licence as a judge.

Mos. Nay, more ;
For he but kills, Sir, where the law condemns,
And these can kill him too.

Corb. Ay, or me,
Or any man. How does his apoplex ?
Is that strong on him still ?

Mos. Most violent.
His speech is broken, and his eyes are set,
His face drawn longer than 'twas wont——

Corb. How, how !
Stronger than he was wont ?

Mos. No, Sir ; his face
Drawn longer than 'twas wont.

Corb. Oh, good !

Mos. His mouth
Is ever gaping, and his eye-lids hang.

Corb. Good !

Mos. A freezing numbness stiffens all his joints,
And makes the colour of his flesh like lead.

Corb. 'Tis good.

Mos. His pulse beats slow and dull.

Corb. Good symptoms still.

Mos. And from his brain——

Corb. I conceive you. Good.

Mos.

Mos. Flows a cold sweat, with a continual rheum,
 'Forth the resolved corners of his eyes.'

Corb. Is't possible? Yet I am better, ha!
 How does he with the swimming of his head?

Mos. Oh, Sir, 'tis past the scotomy! 'He now
 'Hath lost his feeling, and hath left to snort.'
 You hardly can perceive him that he breathes.

Corb. Excellent, excellent! Sure I shall out-last him.
 This makes me young again, a score of years.

Mos. I was a coming for you, Sir.

Corb. Has he made his will?

What has he giv'n me?

Mos. No, Sir.

Corb. Nothing? Ha!

Mos. He has not made his will, Sir.

Corb. Oh, oh, oh!

What then did Voltore, the lawyer, here?

Mos. He smelt a carcase, Sir, when he but heard:
 My master was about his testament;

As I did urge him to it, for your good——

Corb. He came unto him, did he? I thought so.

Mos. Yes, and presented him this piece of plate.

Corb. To be his heir?

Mos. I do not know, Sir.

Corb. True,

I know it too.

Mos. By your own scale, Sir.

Corb. Well,

I shall prevent him yet. See, Mosca, look,
 Here I have brought a bag of bright chequins,
 Will quite weigh down his plate.

Mos. Yea, marry, Sir,

This is true physic; this is your sacred medicine:
 No talk of opiates, to this great elixir.

Corb. 'Tis *aurum palpabile*, if not *potabile*.

Mos. It shall be minister'd to him in his bowl.

Corb. Ay, do, do, do.

Mos. Most blessed cordial!

This will recover him.

Corb. Yes, do, do, do.

Mos. I think it were not best, Sir;

Corb. What?

Mos.

Mos. To recover him.

Corb. Oh, no, no, no ! by no means.

Mos. Why, Sir, this

Will work some strange effect, if he but feel it.

Corb. 'Tis true ; therefore, forbear ; I'll take my ven-
Give me't again. [ture.

Mos. At no hand: pardon me ;

You shall not do yourself that wrong, Sir. I

Will so advise you, you shall have it all.

Corb. How ?

Mos. All, Sir ; 'tis your right, your own ; no man
Can claim a part. 'Tis yours, without a rival,
Decreed by destiny.

Corb. How, how, good Mosca ?

Mos. I'll tell you, Sir. This fit he shall recover.——

Corb. I do conceive you.

Mos. And on first advantage

Of his gain'd sense, will I re-importune him.

Unto the making of his testament ;

And shew him this..

Corb. Good, good.

Mos. 'Tis better yet,

If you will hear, Sir.

Corb. Yes, with all my heart.

Mos. Now, would I counsel you, make home with speed ;
There frame a will, whereto you shall inscribe
My master your sole heir..

Corb. And disinherit

My son ?

Mos. Oh, Sir, the better ! for that colour
Shall make it much more taking.

Corb. Oh, but colour !

Mos. This will, Sir, you shall send it unto me.

Now, when I come t' inforce (as I will do)

Your cares, your watchings, ' and your many prayers,

' Your more than many gifts,' your this day's present,

And last, produce your will, ' where (without thought

' Or least reward, unto your proper issue,

' A son, so brave, and highly meriting)

' The stream of your diverted love hath thrown you

' Upon my master, and made him your heir :'

He

He cannot be so stupid, or stone-dead,
But out of conscience and mere gratitude——

Corb. He must make me his heir.

Mos. 'Tis true.

Corb. This plot
Did I think on before.

Mos. I do believe it?

Corb. Do you not believe it?

Mos. Yes, Sir.

Corb. Mine own project.

Mos. Which when he hath done, Sir——

Corb. Published me his heir?

Mos. And you so certain to survive him——

Corb. Ay.

Mos. Being so lusty a man——

Corb. 'Tis true.

• *Mos.* Yes, Sir——

• *Corb.* I thought on that too. See how he should be
• 'The very organ to express my thoughts!'

Mos. You have not only done yourself a good——

Corb. But multiply'd it on my son.

Mos. 'Tis right, Sir.

Corb. Still my invention!

Mos. 'Las, Sir! Heaven knows,
It hath been all my study, all my care,
I e'en grow grey withal) how to work things——

Corb. I do conceive, sweet Mosca!

Mos. You are he
For whom I labour here.

Corb. Ay, do, do, do.

I'll straight about it.

Mos. Rook go with you, raven.

[*Aside.*

Corb. I know thee honest.

Mos. You do lie, Sir——

[*Aside.*

Corb. And——

Mos. Your knowledge is no better than your ears,
Sir.

[*Aside.*

Corb. I do not doubt to be a father to thee.

Mos. Nor I to gull my brother of his blessing. [*Aside.*

Corb. I may ha' my youth restor'd to me—Why not?

Mos. Your worship is a precious ass—— [*Aside.*

Corb. What say'st thou?

Mos.

Mos. I do desire your worship to make haste, Sir.

Corb. 'Tis done, 'tis done. I go.

[*Exit.*]

Volp. Oh, I shall burst!

Let out my fides, let out my fides!—

Mos. Contain

Your flux of laughter, Sir. You know, this hope
Is such a bait, it covers any hook.

Volp. Oh, but thy working and thy placing it!
I cannot hold—Good rascal, 'let me kiss thee;
I never knew thee in so rare a humour.

Mos. Alas, Sir! I but do as I am taught;
Follow your grave instructions; give 'em words;
Pour oil into their ears; and send them hence.

Volp. 'Tis true, 'tis true. What a rare punishment
Is avarice to itself!

Mos. Ay, with our help, Sir.

' *Volp.* So many cares, so many maladies,
' So many fears attending on old age,
' Yea, death so often call'd on, as no wish
' Can be more frequent with them, their limbs faint,
' Their senses dull, their seeing, hearing, going,
' All dead before them; yea, their very teeth,
' Their instruments of eating, failing them:
' Yet this is reckon'd life! Nay, here was one
' Is now gone home, that wishes to live longer;
' Feels not his gout, nor palsy, feigns himself
' Younger, by scores of years, flatters his age
' With confident belying it, hopes he may,
' With charms like *Æson*, have his youth restor'd;
' And with these thoughts so battens, as if fate
' Would be as easily cheated on as he:
' And all turns air!' Who's there? [*Another knocks.*]
I will be troubled with no more. Prepare
Me music, dances, banquets, all delights;
The Turk is not more sensual in his pleasures,
Than will Volpone— Let me see, a pearl! [*Exit Mos.*]
A diamond, plate, chequins! Good morning's purchase.
Why, this is better than rob churches yet:
' Or fat, by eating (once a month) a man.'

Re-enter Mosca.

Who is't?

Mos. The beauteous Lady Would-be, Sir,

Wife

Wife to the English knight, Sir Politick Would-be,
 ' (This is the stile, Sir, is directed me)'
 Hath sent to know how you have slept to-night,
 And if you would be visited.

Volp. Not now;
 Some three hours hence——

Mos. I told the 'squire so much.

Volp. When I am high with mirth and wine; then,
 'Fore Heaven, I wonder at the desperate valour [then—
 Of the bold English, that they dare let loose
 Their wives to all encounters.

Mos. Sir, this knight
 Has not his name for nothing; he is politick,
 And knows, howe'er his wife affect strange airs,
 She hath not yet the face to be dishonest.
 But had she Signior Corvino's wife's face——

Volp. Has she so rare a face?

Mos. Oh, Sir, the wonder,
 The blazing-star of Italy! a wench
 O' the first year; a beauty ripe as harvest;
 Whose skin is whiter than a swan all over,
 Than silver, snow, or lilies; a soft lip,
 Would tempt you to eternity of kissing;
 And flesh that melteth in the touch to blood,
 Bright as your gold, and lovely as your gold.

Volp. Why had I not known this before?

Mos. Alas, Sir, myself but yesterday discover'd it!

Volp. How might I see her!

Mos. Oh, not possible!

She's kept as warily as is your gold;
 Never does come abroad, never takes air,
 But at a window. All her looks are sweet,
 As the first grapes or cherries, and are watch'd
 As near as they are.

Volp. I must see her——

Mos. Sir,

' There is a guard of ten spies thick upon her;
 ' All his whole household, each of which is set
 ' Upon his fellow, and have all their charge;
 ' When he goes out, when he comes in, examin'd.'

Volp. I will go see her, though but at her window.

Mos. In some disguise then.

Volp.

Volp. That is true; I must
 Maintain mine own shape still the same:
 I'll act as did of old the am'rous Jove,
 Who still in borrow'd shape pursu'd his love.

[*Exeunt.*]

END of the FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

Enter Politick Would-be, and Peregrine.

POLITICK.

SIR, to a wise man all the world's his foil.
 ' It is not Italy, nor France, nor Europe,
 ' That must bound me, if my fates call me forth.
 Yet, I protest, it is no salt desire
 Of seeing countries, shifting a religion,
 ' Nor any disaffection to the state
 ' Where I was bred (and unto which I owe
 ' My dearest plots) hath brought me out; much less
 ' That idle, antic, stale, grey-headed project
 ' Of knowing men's minds and manners, with Ulysses;
 But a peculiar humour of my wife's,
 Laid for this height of Venice, to observe,
 To quote, to learn the language, and so forth——
 I hope you travel, Sir, with licence.

Per. Yes, Sir.

Pol. I am glad of it; I dare the safelier
 Converse. ' How long, Sir,
 ' Since you left England?

Per. Seven weeks.

Pol. So lately!

Pol. You ha' not been with my Lord Ambassador?

Per. Not yet, Sir.

Pol. Pray you, what news, Sir, vents our climate?
 ' I heard last night a most strange thing reported,
 ' By some of my Lord's followers, and I long
 ' To hear how 'twill be seconded.

Per. What was't, Sir?

Pol. Marry, Sir, of a raven that should build
 In a ship royal of the King's.

Per.

‘ *Per.* This fellow,

‘ Does he gull me, trow, or is gull’d?’ Your name, Sir?

Pol. My name is Politick Would-be.

Per. Oh, that speaks him! A knight, Sir?

Pol. A poor knight, Sir.

Per. Your lady

Lies here in Venice, for intelligence

Of titles, and fashions, and behaviour,

Among the courtezans? The fine Lady Would-be.

Pol. Yes, Sir. The spider and the bee, oft-times
Suck from one flower.

Per. Good Sir Politick,

I cry you mercy; I have heard much of you.

‘ ‘Tis true, Sir, of your raven.

‘ *Pol.* On your knowledge?

‘ *Per.* Yes, and your lions whelping in the Tower.

‘ *Pol.* Another whelp!

‘ *Per.* Another, Sir.

‘ *Pol.* Now, Heav’n!

‘ What prodigies be these? The fires at Berwick,

‘ And the new star! These things concurring, strange,

‘ And full of omen!—Saw you these meteors?

‘ *Per.* I did, Sir.

‘ *Pol.* Fearful! Pray you, Sir, confirm me;

‘ Were there three porpoises seen above the bridge,

‘ As they give out?

‘ *Per.* Nay, Sir, be not so;

‘ I’ll tell you a greater prodigy than these.

‘ *Pol.* What should these things portend?

‘ *Per.* The very day

‘ (Let me be sure) that I put forth from London,

‘ There was a whale discover’d in the river,

‘ As high as Woolwich, that had waited there

‘ (Few know how many months) for the subversion

‘ Of the Stode-fleet.

‘ *Pol.* Is’t possible? Believe it,

‘ ’Twas either sent from Spain, or the Archduke’s.

‘ Spinola’s whale, upon my life, my credit!

‘ Will they not leave these projects? Worthy Sir,

‘ Some other news.

‘ *Per.* Faith, Stone the fool is dead,

‘ And they do lack a tavern-fool extremely.

‘ *Pol.* Is Mafs’ Stone dead ?

‘ *Per.* He’s dead, Sir. Why, I hope

‘ You thought him not-immortal ?—Oh, this knight,

‘ Were he well known, would be a precious thing

‘ To fit our English stage. He that should write

‘ But such a fellow, should be thought to feign

‘ Extremely, if not maliciously. [*Aside.*

‘ *Pol.* Stone dead !

‘ *Per.* Dead. Lord, how deeply, Sir you apprehend it !

‘ He was no kinsman to you ?

‘ *Pol.* That I know of.

‘ Well, that same fellow was an unknown fool.

‘ *Per.* And yet you knew him, it seems.

‘ *Pol.* I did so, Sir.

‘ I knew him one of the most dangerous heads

‘ Living within the state, and so I held him.

‘ *Per.* Indeed, Sir !

‘ *Pol.* While he liv’d, in action,

‘ He has receiv’d weekly intelligence,

‘ Upon my knowledge, out of the Low Countries,

‘ (For all parts of the world) in cabbages ;

‘ And those dispens’d again to ambassadors

‘ In oranges, musk-melons, apricots,

‘ Lemons, pomecitrons, and such like ; sometimes

‘ In Colchester oysters, and your Selfey cockles.

‘ *Per.* You make me wonder !

‘ *Pol.* Sir, upon my knowledge.

‘ Nay, I have observ’d him, at your public ordinary,

‘ Take his advertisement from a traveller

‘ (A conceal’d statesman) in a trencher of meat,

‘ And instantly, before the meal was done,

‘ Convey an answer in a tooth-pick.

‘ *Per.* Strange !

‘ How could this be, Sir ?

‘ *Pol.* Why, the meat was cut

‘ So like his character, and so laid, as he

‘ Must easily read the cypher.

‘ *Per.* I have heard

‘ He could not read, Sir.

‘ *Pol.* So ’twas given out

‘ (In polity) by those that did employ him ;

‘ But

‘ But he could read, and had your languages,
 ‘ And to’t, as found a noddle——

‘ *Per.* I have heard, Sir,

‘ That your Babiouns were spies, and that they were
 ‘ A kind of subtle nation near to China.

‘ *Pol.* Ay, ay, your Mamuluchi. Faith, they had
 ‘ Their hand in a French plot or two; but they

‘ Were so extremely given to women, as

‘ They made discovery of all. Yet I

‘ Had my advices here (on Wednesday last).

‘ From one of their own coat, they were return’d,

‘ Made their relations, (as the fashion is)

‘ And now stand fair for fresh employment.

‘ *Per.* Heart!

‘ This Sir Pol will be ignorant of nothing.

[*Aside.*

‘ It seems, Sir, you know all.

‘ *Pol.* Not all, Sir: but

‘ I have some general notions. I do love

‘ To note, and to observe; though I live out,

‘ Free from the active torrent, yet I’d mark

‘ The currents and the passages of things,

‘ For mine own private use; and know the ebbs

‘ And flows of state.

‘ *Per.* Believe it, Sir, I hold

‘ Myself in no small tie unto my fortunes,

‘ For casting me thus luckily upon you,

‘ Whose knowledge (if your bounty equal it)

‘ May do me great assistance, in instruction

‘ For my behaviour and my bearing, which

‘ Is yet so rude and raw——

‘ *Pol.* Why, came you forth

‘ Empty of rules for travel?

‘ *Per.* Faith, I had

‘ Some common ones, from out that vulgar grammar,

‘ Which he that cry’d Italian to me taught me.

‘ *Pol.* Why, this it is that spoils all our brave bloods,

‘ Trusting our hopeful gentry unto pedants,

‘ Fellows of out-side, and mere bark. You seem

‘ To be a gentleman of ingenious race——

‘ I not profess it, but my fate hath been

‘ To be where I have been consulted with

' In this high kind, touching some great men's sons,
' Persons of blood and honour——

' *Per.* Who be these, Sir ?'

Enter Mosca, Politick, and Peregrine.

Mos. Under that window, there't must be. The same.

Pol. Fellows, to mount a bank ! Did your instructor
In the dear tongues, never discourse to you
Of the Italian mountebanks ?

Per. Yes, Sir.

Pol. Why,

Here shall you see one.

Per. They are quack-salvers,
Fellows, that live by venting oils and drugs ?

Pol. Was that the character he gave you of them ?

Per. As I remember.

Pol. Pity his ignorance.

They are the only knowing men of Europe !
Great general scholars, excellent physicians,
Most admir'd statesmen, profess favourites,
And cabinet counsellors to the greatest princes !
The only learned men of all the world !

Per. And, I have heard, they are most lewd impostors ;
' Made all of terms and shreds ; no less belyers
' Of great men's favours, than their own vile medicines ;
' Which they will utter upon monstrous oaths ;'
Selling that drug, for two-pence, ere they part,
Which they have valued at twelve crowns before.

Pol. Sir, calumnies are answer'd best with silence :
Yourself shall judge. Who is it mounts, my friends ?

Mos. Scoto of Mantua, Sir.

Pol. Is't he ? Nay, then

I'll proudly promise, Sir, you shall behold
Another man that has been phant'ied to you.
I wonder, yet, that he should mount his bank,
Here in this nook, that has been wont t'appear
In face of the Piazza ! Here, he comes.,

Enter Volpone and Mob.

Volp. Mount, Zany.

Mob. Follow, follow, follow, follow, follow.

Pol. See how the people follow him ! he's a man
May write ten thousand crowns in bank here. Note,
Mark

Mark but his gesture: I do use to observe
The state he keeps in getting up!

Per. 'Tis worth it, Sir.

Volp. Most noble gent. and my worthy patrons, it may seem strange, that I, your *Scoto Mantuano*, who was ever wont to fix my bank in face of the public 'Piazza,' near the shelter of the Portico, 'to the Procuratia,' should now (after eight months absence, from this illustrious city of Venice) humbly retire myself, into an obscure nook of the Piazza.

Pol. Did not I, now, object the same?

Per. Peace, Sir.

Volp. Let me tell you: I am not (as your Lombard proverb saith) cold on my feet; or content to part with my commodities at a cheaper rate, than I accustomed; look not for it. Nor that the calumnious reports of that impudent detractor, and shame to our profession, (Alessandro Buttone, I mean) who gave out in public, I was condemned a' *Sforzato* to the galleys, for poisoning the Cardinal Bembo's——cook, hath at all attached, much less dejected me, No, no, worthy gent. ' (to tell you 'true') I cannot endure to see the rabble of these ground *ciarlitani*, 'that spread their cloaks on the pavement, as 'if they meant to do feats of activity, and then come 'in lamely, with their mouldy tales out of Boccaccio, like 'stale Tabarine, the fabulist; some of them discoursing 'their travels, and of their tedious captivity in the Turk's 'galleys, when indeed (were the truth known) they were 'the Christian galleys, where very temp'rately they eat 'bread, and drink water, as a wholesome penance, (en- 'joined them by their confessors) for base pilferies.'

Pol. Note but his bearing, and contempt of these.

'*Volp.* These turdy facy-nasty paty-lousy fartical rogues 'with one poor groatsworth of unprepared antimony, 'finely wrapt up in several *scartoccios*, are able, very 'well, to kill their twenty a week, and play; yet, these 'meager starved spirits, who have half stopt the organs 'of their minds with earthly oppilations, want not their 'favourers among your shrivelled, sallad-eating artizans; 'who are overjoyed, that they may have their half-pe'rish 'of phyfic, though it purge them into another world, it 'makes no matter.

' *Pol.* Excellent! Have you heard better language, Sir?'

Vol. Well, let them go. And, gentlemen, honourable gentlemen, know, though at for this time, our bank, being thus removed from the clamours of the *canaglia*, shall be the scene of pleasure and delight: for, I have nothing to sell, little or nothing to sell

Pol. I told you, Sir, his end.

Per. You did so, Sir.

Volp. I protest, I and my six servants are not able to make of this precious liquor, so fast, as it is fetched away from my lodging 'by gentlemen of your city; strangers of the *terra firma*; worshipful merchants; ay, and senators too; who, ever since my arrival, have detained me to their uses, by their splendidous liberalities.' And worthily: for, what avails your rich man to have his magazines stuffed with moscadelly, or of the purest grape, when his physicians prescribe him (on pain of death) to drink nothing but water, 'cocked with aniseeds?' Oh, health! health! The blessing of the rich! The riches of the poor! Who can buy thee at too dear a rate, 'since there is no enjoying this world without thee?' Be not then so sparing of your purses, honourable gentlemen, as to abridge the natural course of life——

Per. You see his end?

Pol. Ay, is't not good?

Volp. For, when a humid flux, or catarrh, 'by the mutability of air,' falls 'from your head' into an arm or shoulder, or any other part; take you a duckat, or your chequin of gold, and apply to the place affected; see what good effect it can work. No, no, 'tis this blessed *unguento*, 'this rare extraction,' that hath only power to disperse all malignant humours, that proceed either of hot, cold, moist, or windy causes.

Per. I would he had put in dry too.

Pol. Pray you, observe.

Vol. To satisfy the most indigest and crude stomach, 'ay, were it of one that (through extreme weakness) vomited blood, applying only a warm napkin to the place, 'after the unction and fricace;' for the vertigine, in the head, 'putting but a drop into your nostrils, likewise behind the ears;' a most sovereign and approved remedy; the

the *mal-caduco*, cramps, convulsions, paralyfies, epilepfies, *tremor-cordia*, ‘retired’ nerves, ‘ill vapours of the’ spleen, ‘ftopping of the liver,’ the ftone, the ftangury, *hernia ventofa*, *illiaca paffio*; ftops a *difenteria* immediately, eafeth the tortion of the ftall guts, and cures *melancholia hypochondriaca*, being taken and applied according to my printed receipt. For this is the phyfician, this is the medicine; [*Pointing to his bill and his glafs.*] this counfels, this cures; this gives the direftion, this works the effect: and, in ftum, both together may be termed an abftact of the theoric and practic in the *Æfculapian* art. ’Twill coft you eight crowns. And, Zan Fritada, pr’ythee, fpeak a fpeech extempore in honour of it.

‘*Pol.* How do you like him, Sir?’

‘*Per.* Moft ftangely, I.

‘*Pol.* Is not his language rare?’

‘*Per.* But alchymy, I

‘never heard the like, or Broughton’s books.’

Mof. Had old Hippocrates, or Galen,
 (That to their books put medicines all in)
 But known this fecret, they had never
 (Of which they will be guilty ever)
 Been murderers of fo much paper,
 Or wafed many a hurtlefs taper;
 No Indian drug had e’er been famed,
 Tobacco, faffafras not named;
 Ne yet of guacum one ftall ftick, Sir,
 Nor Raymund Lully’s great elixir:
 Ne had been known the Danifh Gonfwart,
 Or Paracelfus, with his long fword.

[*Celia appears at the balcony.*]

Per. All this yet will not do; eight crowns is high.

Volp. No more, geutlemen; ‘if I had but time to dif-
 ‘course to you the miraculous effects of this my oil, fur-
 ‘named *oglio del Scoto*; which the countlefs catalogue of
 ‘thofe I have cured of the aforefaid, and many more
 ‘difeafes; the patents and privileges of all the princes
 ‘and commonwealths of Chriftendom; or but the de-
 ‘pofitions of thofe that appeared on my part before the
 ‘Signiory of the Sanita, and moft learned college of
 ‘phyficians; where I was authorized, upon notice taken
 ‘of

' of the admirable virtues of my medicaments, and mine
 ' own excellency in matter of rare and unknown secrets,
 ' not only to disperse them publicly in this famous city,
 ' but in all the territories that happily joy under the go-
 ' vernment of the most pious and magnificent states of
 ' Italy. But may some other gallant fellow say, Oh,
 ' there be divers that make profession to have as good, and
 ' as experimented receipts as yours. Indeed, very many
 ' have assayed, like apes, in imitation of that which is
 ' really and essentially in me, to make of this oil; bestow-
 ' ed great cost in furnaces, stills, alembicks, continual
 ' fires, and preparation of the ingredients, (as indeed there
 ' goes to it six hundred several simples, besides some
 ' quantity of human fat, for the conglutination, which
 ' we buy of the anatomists) but when these practitioners
 ' come to the last decoction, blow, blow, puff, puff, and
 ' all flies in *fumo*! Ha, ha, ha!—Poor wretches! I ra-
 ' ther pity their folly and indiscretion, than their loss of
 ' time and money; for those may be recovered by in-
 ' dustry; but to be a fool born, is a disease incurable.
 ' For myself, I always from my youth have endeavoured
 ' to get the rarest secrets, and book them, either in ex-
 ' change, or for money: I spared not cost nor labour,
 ' where any thing was worthy to be learned. And, gen-
 ' tlemen, honourable gentlemen, I will undertake (by
 ' virtue of chymical art) out of the honourable hat that
 ' covers your head, to extract the four elements; that is
 ' to say, fire, air, water, and earth, and return you your
 ' felt without burn or stain. For, whilst others have
 ' been at the Balloo, I have been at my book; and am
 ' now at the craggy paths of study, and come to the flo-
 ' wery plains of honour and reputation,

' *Pol.* I do assure you, Sir, that is his aim.

' *Volp.* But, to our price——

' *Per.* And that withal, Sir Pol.

' *Volp.* You all know, honourable gentlemen, I never
 valued this *ampulla*, or phial, at less than eight crowns;
 but, for this time, I am content to be deprived of it for
 six; six crowns is the price; 'and less, in courtesy, I
 ' know you cannot offer me;' take it or leave it; 'how-
 ' soever, both it and I am at at your service.' I ask you
 not as the value of the thing; for then I should demand

of

you a thousand crowns, so the Cardinals Montalto, Ferruese, the Great Duke of Tuscany, my gossip, with divers other princes, have given me ; but I despise money : only to shew my affection to you, honourable gentlemen, and your illustrious state here, I have neglected the messages of these princes, mine own offices, fram'd my journey higher, only to present you with the fruits of my travels. 'Tune your voices to the touch of your instruments, and give the honourable assembly some delightful recreation.'

'*Per.* What monstrous and most painful circumstance
'Is here, to get some three or four gazets!
Some three-pence i' the whole ; for that 'twill come to.

SONG.

- ' You that would last long, list to my song,
- ' Make no more coil, but buy of this oil.
- ' Would you be ever fair and young,
- ' Stout of teeth, and strong of tongue,
- ' Tart of palate, quick of ear,
- ' Sharp of sight, of nostril clear,
- ' Moist of hand, and light of foot,
- ' (Or I will come nearer to't)
- ' Would you live free from all diseases ?
- ' Do the act your mistress pleases ;
- ' Yea, fright all aches from your bones ?
- ' Here's a medicine for the nones.'

Volp. Well, I am in a humour, at this time, to make a present of the small quantity my coffer contains ; to the rich, in courtesy, and to the poor, for charity. Wherefore, now mark ; I ask'd you six crowns, and six crowns at other times you have paid me : you shall not give me six crowns, nor five, nor four, nor three, nor two, nor one, nor half a ducat, no, nor a *muccinigo* ; six-pence it will cost you, or six-hundred pounds—expect no lower price ; for, by the banner of my front, I will not 'bate a bagatine, 'that I will have only a pledge of your loves, to carry something from amongst you, to shew I 'am not contemned by you.' Therefore, now toss your handkerchiefs, chearfully, chearfully ; and be advertised, that the first heroic spirit that deigus to grace me

me with a handkerchief, I will give it a little remembrance of something beside, shall please it better than if I had presented it with a double pistolet.

Per. Will you be that heroic spark, Sir Pol?

Oh, see! the window has prevented you.

[*Celia, at the window, throws down her handkerchief.*]

Volp. Lady, I kiss your bounty; and for this timely grace you have done your poor Scoto of Mantua, I will return you, over and above my oil, a secret of that high and inestimable nature, shall make you for ever enamoured, on that minute wherein your eye first descended on so mean (yet not altogether to be despised) an object. Here is a powder concealed in this paper, of which, if I should speak to the worth, nine thousand volumes were but as one page, that page as a line, that line as a word, 'so short is this pilgrimage of man (which some call life) to the expressing of it. Would I reflect on the price? Why, the whole world is but as an empire, that empire as a province, that province as a bank, that bank as a private purse, to the purchase of it.' I will only tell you, it is the powder that made Venus a goddess, (given her by Apollo) 'that kept her perpetually young, cleared her wrinkles, firmed her gums, filled her skin, coloured her hair;' from her derived to Helen, and at the sack of Troy unfortunately lost; till now, in this our age, it was as happily recovered, by a studious antiquary, out of some ruins of Asia, who sent a moiety of it to the court of France, (but much sophisticated) wherewith the ladies there, now colour their hair. The rest, at this present, remains with me, extracted to a quintessence; so that wherever it but touches, in youth it perpetually preserves, in age restores the complexion, sets your teeth, did they dance like virginal jacks, firm as a wall, makes them white as ivory, that were as black as——

Enter Corvino.

Corv. Spite o' the devil, and my shame! come down here——

Come down. No house but mine to make your scene?

Signior Flaminio, will you down, Sir? Down.

What, is my wife your Franciscina, Sir?

No windows on the whole Piazza here,

To make your properties, but mine, but mine?

'Heart!

‘ Heart ! ere to-morrow I shall be new-christen’d,
 ‘ And call’d the *Pantalone di Besogniosi*
 ‘ About the town.’

[*Exit.*

Per. What should this mean, Sir Pol ?

Pol. Some trick of state, believe it. I will home.

Per. It may be some design on you.

Pol. I know not.

I’ll stand upon my guard.

Per. ’Tis your best, Sir.

Pol. This three weeks, all my advices, all my letters,
 They have been intercepted.

Per. Indeed, Sir ?

Best have a care.

Pol. Nay, so I will.

‘ *Per.* This knight,

‘ I may not lose him, for my mirth, till night,’

[*Exeunt all but Volp. and Mosca.*

Volp. Oh, I am wounded !

Mos. Where, Sir ?

Volp. Not without ;

Those blows were nothing ; I could bear them ever ;

But angry Cupid, bolting from her eyes,

Hath shot himself into me, like a flame,

‘ Where now he flings about his burning heat,

‘ As in a furnace some ambitious fire,

‘ Whose vent is stopp’d. The fight is all within me.’

I cannot live, except thou help me, Mosca :

‘ My liver melts, and I, without the hope

‘ Of some soft air from her refreshing breath,

‘ Am but a heap of cinders.

‘ *Mos.* ’Las, good Sir !

‘ Would you had never seen her !

‘ *Volp.* Nay, would thou

‘ Hadst never told me of her.

‘ *Mos.* Sir, ’tis true ;

‘ I do confess I was unfortunate,

‘ And you unhappy. But I’m bound in conscience,

‘ No less than duty, to effect my best

‘ To your release of torment, and I will, Sir.

‘ *Volp.* Dear Mosca, shall I hope ?

Mos. Sir, more than dear,

I will not bid you to despair of ought
Within a human compass.

Volp. Oh, there spoke
My better angel. *Mosca*, take my keys,
Gold, plate, and jewels, all's at thy devotion;
Employ them how thou wilt; nay, coin me too,
So thou in this but crown my longings, *Mosca*.

Mos. Use but your patience.

Volp. So I have.

Mos. I doubt not
To bring success to your desires.

Volp. Nay, then,
I not repent me of my late disguise.

Mos. If you can horn him, Sir, you need not.

Volp. True.

Besides, I never meant him for my heir.

• Is not the colour o' my beard and eye-brows

• To make me known?

• *Mos.* No jot.

• *Volp.* I did it well.

Did I not act it well?

Mos. So well, would I could follow you in mine
With half the happiness: and yet I would
Escape your epilogue.

Volp. But were they gull'd
With a belief that I was *Scoto*?

Mos. Sir,

Scoto himself could hardly have distinguish'd.
I have not time to flatter you now; we'll part;
And as I prosper, so applaud my art.

[*Exeunt.*]

S C E N E, *Corvino's House.*

Enter Corvino and Celia.

Corv. Death of mine honour! with the city's fool!
A juggling, tooth-drawing, prating mountebank!
And at a public window! 'where, whilst he,
' With his strain'd action, and his dole of faces,
' To his drug-lecture draws your itching ears,
' A crew of old, unmarried, noted lechers,
' Stood leering up like satyrs: and you smile
' Most graciously, and fan your favours forth,
' To give your hot spectators satisfaction.

• What

' What, was your mountebank their call, their whistle ?
 ' Or were you enamour'd on his copper rings,
 ' His saffron jewel, with the toad-stone in't ?
 ' Or his embroider'd suit, with the copé-stitch,
 ' Made of a herse-cloth ? Or his old tilt-feather ?
 ' Or his starch'd beard ? Well, you shall have him : yes,
 ' He shall come home, and minister unto you
 ' The fricace for the mother. Or, let me see ;
 ' I think you had rather mount. Would you not mount ?
 ' Why, if you'll mount, you may ; yes, truly, you may ;
 ' And so you may be seen down to the foot.
 ' Get you a cittern, Lady Vanity,
 ' And be a dealer with the virtuous man.
 ' Make one ; I'll but protest myself a cuckold,
 ' And save your dowry.' I am a Dutchman, I ;
 For if you thought me an Italian,
 ' You would be damn'd ere you did this, you whore !'
 Thou'dst tremble to imagine that the murder
 Of father, mother, brother, all thy race,
 Should follow, as the subject of my justice.

Cel. Good Sir, have patience !

Corv. What couldst thou propose
 Less to thyself, than, in this heat of wrath,
 And stung with my dishonour, I should strike
 This steel into thee, with as many stabs
 As thou wert gaz'd upon with goatish eyes ?

Cel. Alas, Sir, be pleas'd ! I could not think
 My being at the window should more now
 Move your impatience, than at other times.

Corv. No ? Not to seek and entertain a parley
 With a known knave, before a multitude ?
 You were an actor with your handkerchief,
 Which he most sweetly kiss'd in the receipt,
 And might, no doubt, return it with a letter,
 And 'point the place where you might meet ; your sisters,
 Your mothers, or your aunts, might serve the turn.

Cel. Why, dear Sir, when do I make these excuses,
 Or ever stir abroad, but to the church ?
 And that so seldom——

Corv. Well, it shall be less ;
 And thy restraint before was liberty,
 To what I now decree ; and therefore mark me.

D :

First,

First, I will have this bawdy light damm'd up ;
 And till't be done, some two or three yards off,
 I'll chalk a line, o'er which, if thou but chance
 'To set thy desp'rate foot, more hell, more horror,
 More wild remorseless rage, shall seize on thee,
 'Than on a conjurer, that had heedless left
 His circle's safety ere his devil was laid.

' Then here's a lock, which I will hang upon thee ;
 ' And, now I think on't, I will keep thee backwards ;
 ' Thy lodging shall be backwards, thy walks backwards,
 ' Thy prospects all be backwards, and no pleasure
 ' That thou shalt know, but backwards. Nay, since you
 ' My honest nature, know, it is your own [force
 ' Being too open, makes me use you thus.
 ' Since you will not contain your subtle nostrils
 ' In a sweet room, but they must snuff the air
 ' Of rank and sweaty passengers.' One knocks.

[Knock within.

Away, and be not seen, pain of thy life,
 Nor look toward the window : if thou dost——
 Harlot, away !

' Nay, stay, hear this,' let me not prosper, ' whore,'
 But I will make thee an anatomy,
 ' Dissect thee mine own self, and read a lecture
 ' Upon thee to the city, and in public.'
 Away——[Exit Celia.]——Who's there ?

Enter Servant.

Ser. 'Tis Signior Mosca, Sir.

Corw. Let him come in ; his master's dead : there's yet
 Some good to help the bad.

Enter Mosca.

My Mosca, welcome ! I guess your news.

Mos. I fear you cannot, Sir.

Corw. Is't not his death ?

Mos. Rather the contrary.

Corw. Not his recovery ?

Mos. Yes, Sir.

Corw. I am curs'd,

I am bewitch'd, my crosses meet to vex me.
 How, how, how, how ?

Mos. Why, Sir, with Scoto's oil.

Corbaccio

Corbaccio and Voltore brought of it,
Whilst I was busy in an inner room.

Corv. Death! that damn'd mountebank! But for the
Now, I could kill the rascal. It cannot be, [law,
His oil should have that virtue. Ha' not I
Known him a common rogue, come fideling in
To the Osteria, 'with a tumbling whore,'
And, when he has done all his forc'd tricks, been glad
Of a poor spoonful of dead wine, with flies in't.
It cannot be. All his ingredients
A sheep's gall, a roasted bitch's marrow,
Some few sod earwigs, pounded caterpillars,
A little capon's grease, and fasting spittle.
I know them to a drachm.

Mos. I know not, Sir;
But some on't, there, they pour'd into his ears,
Some in his nostrils, and recover'd him:

'Applying but the fricace.'

Corv. Damnation! 'Pox o' that fricace!

Mos. And since, to seem the more officious,
'And flatt'ring of his health,' there they have had
'(At extreme fees)' the college of physicians
Consulting on him, how they might restore him;
'Where one would have a cataplasm of spices,
'Another a flay'd ape clapp'd to his breast,
'A third would ha' it a dog, a fourth an oil,
'With wild-cats' skins.' At last, they all resolv'd,
That, to preserve him, was no other means,
But some young woman must straight be sought out,
Lusty, and full of health, to sleep by him;
And to this service (most unhappily,
And most unwillingly) am I now employ'd,
'Which here I thought to pre-acquaint you with,
'For your advice, since it concerns you most,
'Because I would not do that thing might cross
'Your ends, on whom I have my whole dependence, Sir.'
Yet if I do it not, they may report
My slackness to my patron, work me out
Of his opinion, and there all your hopes,
Ventures, or whatsoever, are all frustrate.
I do but tell you, Sir. Besides, they are all
Now striving who shall first present him. Therefore

I could intreat you briefly to conclude somewhat.
Prevent them if you can.

Corv. Death to my hopes?

This is my villainous fortune!—Best to hire
Some common courtezan.

Mof. Ay, I thought on that, Sir;
But they are all so subtle, full of art,
And age again doting and flexible,
So as—I cannot tell—we may perchance
Light on a quean may cheat us all.

Corv. 'Tis true.

Mof. No, no; it must be one that has no tricks, Sir;
Some simple thing, a creature made unto it;
Some wench you may command. Ha' you no kinswoman?
Gods-so——Think, think, Sir.
One o' the doctors offer'd there his daughter.

Corv. How!

Mof. Yes, Signior Lupo, the phyfician.

Corv. His daughter!

Mof. And a virgin, Sir. Why, alas!
He knows the state of's body, what it is,
That nought can warm his blood, Sir, but a fever,
Nor any incantation raise his spirit.

'A long forgetfulness hath seiz'd that part.'
Besides, Sir, who shall know it? Some one or two——

Corv. I pray thee, give me leave. If any man
But I had had this luck——The thing in't self,
I know, is nothing——Wherefore should not I
As well command my blood and my affections,
As this dull doctor? In the point of honour,
The cases are all one of wife and daughter.

Mof. I hear him coming.

[*Aside.*

Corv. She shall do't. 'Tis done.
'Slight! if this doctor, who is not engag'd,
Unless 't be for his counsel, (which is nothing)
Offer his daughter, what should I, that am
So deeply in? I will prevent him—Wretch!
Covetous wretch!——Mosca, I have determin'd.

Mof. How, Sir?

Corv. We'll make all sure. The party you wot of,
Shall be mine own wife, Mosca.

Mof. S; , the thing

(But

(But that I would not seem to counsel you).
 I shou'd have motion'd to you at the first :
 And make your count, you have cut all their throats,
 Why ? 'Tis directly taking a possession !
 And, in his next fit, we may let him go.
 'Tis but to pull the pillow from his head,
 And he is throttled : 't had been done before,
 But for your scrupulous doubts.

Corv. Ay, a plague on't.
 My conscience fools my wit. Well, I'll be brief,
 And so be thou, lest they should be before us :
 Go home, prepare him, tell him with what zeal,
 And willingness I do it for ; swear it was
 On the first hearing (as thou may'st do, truly)
 Mine own free motion.

Mos. Sir, I warrant you,
 I'll so possess him with it, that the rest
 Of his starved clients shall be banished all ;
 And only you received. But come not, Sir,
 Until I send, for I have something else
 To ripen for your good, (you must not know't)

Corv. But do not you forget to send now.

Mos. Fear not.

[*Exit.*

Enter Celia.

Cor. Where are you, wife ? My Celia ? Wife ? What
 blubbering ?

Come, dry those tears. I think thou thoughtest me in
 Ha ? By this light I talk'd so but to try thee. [earnest.
 Methinks the lightness of the occasion
 Should ha' confirmed thee. Come, I am not jealous.

Cel. No ?

Cor. Faith, I am not, I, nor ever was : -

It is a poor unprofitable humour.

Do not I know if women have a will,

They'll stray 'gainst all the watches o' the world ?

And that the fiercest spies are tamed with gold ?

Tut, I am confident in thee, thou shalt see't :

And see, I'll give thee cause too, to believe it.

Come, kiss me. Go, and make thee ready straight,

In all thy best attire, thy choicest jewels ;

Put 'em all on, and, with 'em, thy best looks :

We are invited to a solemn feast,

At old Volpone's, where it shall appear.
How far I'm free, from jealousy to fear.

[*Exeunt.*]

END of the SECOND ACT.

A C T III.

Enter Mosca.

MOSCA.

I FEAR I shall begin to grow in love
With my dear self, and my most prosperous parts,
'They do so spring and burgeon,' I can feel
A whimsy i' my blood: (I know not how)
Success hath made me wanton. I could skip
Out of my skin, now like a subtil snake,
I am so limber. O! your parasite
Is a most precious thing, dropt from above,
Not bred 'mongst clods and clot-pouls, here on earth.
I muse the mystery was not made a science,
It is so liberally professed! almost
All the wise world is little else, in nature
But parasites, or sub-parasites. And yet,
I mean not those that have your bare town-art,
To know, who's fit to feed 'em; 'have no house,
'No family, no care, and therefore mould
'Tales for men's ears, to beat that sense; or get
'Kitchen-invention, and some stale receipts
'To please the belly, and the groin;' nor those,
With their court-dog tricks, that can fawn and flatter,
Make their revenue out of legs and faces,
Echo my lord, and lick away a moth:
But your fine eloquent rascal, that can rise,
And stoop (almost together) like an arrow,
'Shoot through the air as nimbly as a star;
Turn short, as doth a swallow; and be here,
And there, and here, and yonder all at once;
Present to any humour, all occasion;
And change a vizor swifter than a thought!
This is the creature had the art born with him,
Toils not to learn it, but doth practise it

Out

Out of most excellent nature : and such sparks
Are the true parasites, others but their Zanis.

Enter Bonario.

Mos. Who's this ? Bonario, old Corbaccio's son ?
The person I was bound to seek. Fair Sir,
You are happily met.

Bon. That cannot be by thee.

Mos. Why, Sir ?

Bon. Nay, pr'ythee know thy way, and leave me :
I would be loth to interchange discourse
With such a mate as thou art.

Mos. Courteous Sir,
Scorn not my poverty.

Bon. Not I, by heaven :
But thou shalt give me leave to hate thy baseness.

Mos. Baseness ?

Bon. Ay, answer me, is not thy sloth
Sufficient argument ? thy flattery ?
Thy means of feeding ?

Mos. Heaven be good to me.
These imputations are too common, Sir,
And easily struck on virtue, when she's poor ;
' You are unequal to me, and how e're
' Your sentence may be righteous, yet you are not,
' That, ere you know me, thus, proceed in censure,'
Saint Mark bear witness 'gainst you, 'tis inhuman.

Bon. What ! does he weep ? the sign is soft, and good !
I do repent me that I was so harsh.

Mos. 'Tis true, that, sway'd by strong necessity,
I am enforc'd to eat my careful bread
With too much obsequy ; ' 'tis true, beside,
' That I am fain to spin mine own poor raiment,
' Out of my mere observance, being not born
' To a free fortune : ' but that I have done
Base offices, in rending friends asunder,
Dividing families, betraying counsels,
' Whispering false lies, or mining men with praises,
' Train'd their credulity with perjuries,'
Corrupted chastity, or am in love
With mine own tender ease, but would not rather
Prove the most rugged and laborious course,

That

That might redeem my present estimation ;
Let me here perish, in all hope of goodness.

Bon. This cannot be a personated passion !
I was to blame, so to mistake thy nature ;
Pr'ythee forgive me : and speak out thy business.

Mos. Sir, it concerns you ; and though I may seem
At first to make a main offence in manners,
And in my gratitude unto my master ;
Yet, for the pure love, which I bear all right,
And hatred of the wrong, I must reveal it.
This very hour your father is in purpose
To disinherit you.

Bon. How !

Mos. And thrust you forth,
As a mere stranger to his blood ? 'tis true, Sir :
The work no way engageth me, but as
I claim an interest in the general state
Of goodness and true virtue, which I hear
T'abound in you, and for which mere respect,
Without a second aim, Sir, I have done it.

Bon. This tale hath lost thee much of the late trust
Thou had'st with me ; 'tis impossible :
I know not how to lend it any thought,
My father should be so unnatural.

Mos. It is a confidence, that well becomes
Your piety ; and 'form'd (no doubt) it is
'From your own simple' innocence : which makes
Your wrong more monstrous and abhorr'd. But, Sir,
I now will tell you more. This very minute,
It is or will be doing : and, if you
Shall be but pleas'd to go with me, I'll bring you,
(I dare not say where you shall see, but) where
Your ear shall be a witness of the deed ;
Hear yourself written bastard : and profess
The common issue of the earth.

Bon. I am amaz'd !

Mos. Sir, if I do it not, draw your just sword,
And score your vengeance on my front and face ;
Mark me your villain : you have too much wrong,
And I do suffer for you, Sir. My heart
Weeps blood in anguish.

Bon. Lead, I follow thee.

[*Exeunt.*
SCENE,

SCENE, Volpone's House.

Enter Volpone, Nano, Androgyno and Castrone.

[*A Knocking.*]

Vol. Mosca stays long, methinks. 'Bring forth your sports,

'And help to make the wretched time more sweet,

'*Nan.* Dwarf, fool and eunuch, here well met we be.

'A question it were now, whether of us three,

'Being all the known delicacies of a rich man,

'In pleasing him, claim the precedency can?

'*Cas.* I claim for myself.

'*And.* ——— And so doth the fool.

'*Nan.* 'Tis foolish indeed: let me set you both to school,

'First, for your dwarf, he's little and witty,

'And every thing, as it is little, is pretty;

'Else why do men say to a creature of my shape,

'So soon as they see him, it's a pretty little ape?

'And why a pretty ape? but for pleasing imitation,

'Of greater men's actions in a ridiculous fashion.

'Beside this feat body of mine doth not crave

'Half the meat, drink, and cloth, one of your bulks will have.

'Admit your fool's face be the mother of laughter,

'Yet, for his brain, it must always come after:

'And though that do feed him, it's a pitiful case.

'His body is beholding to such a bad face.'

Vol. Who's there? 'my couch, away, look, Nano, see,

'Give me my caps, first, go, enquire. Now, Cupid, send it by Mosca, and with fair return.

Nan. It is the beauteous Madam——

Vol. Would-be—is it?

Nan. The same.

Vol. Now torment on me; squire her in:

For she will enter or dwell here for ever.

Nay, quickly, that my fit were past. 'I fear

'A second Hell too, that my loathing this

'Will quite expel my appetite to the other.'

Would she were taking now her tedious leave,

Lord, how it threatens me what I am to suffer!

Enter Lady and 2 Women.

Lady. I thank you, good Sir. 'Pray you signify

Unto

Unto your patron, I am here. This band
Shews not my neck enough, (I trouble you, Sir,
Let me request you, bid one of my women
Come hither to me) in good faith, I am drest
Most favourably to-day; it is no matter,
'Tis well enough. Look, see, these petulant things!
How they have done this!

Volp. I do feel the fever
Ent'ring in at mine ears—Oh, for a charm,
To fright it hence!

Lady. Come nearer; is this curl
In his right place? Or this? Why is this higher
Than all the rest? You ha' not wash'd your eyes yet?
Or do they not stand even i' your head?
Where's your fellow? Call her.

'*Nan.* Now, St. Mark
' Deliver us! Anon, she'll beat her women,
' Because her nose is red.

[*Aside.*]

Lady. I pray you, view
This tire, forsooth. Are all things apt or no?

Wom. One hair a little here sticks out, forsooth.

Lady. Does't so, forsooth? And where was your dear
When it did so, forsooth? 'What now? Bird-ey'd? [*sight,*
' And you too?'] Pray you, both approach, and mend it.
Now, by that light, I muse you're not asham'd!

' I, that have preach'd these things so oft unto you,
' Read you the principles, argued all the grounds,
' Disputed every fitness, every grace,
' Call'd you to counsel of so frequent dressings——

' *Nan.* More carefully than of your fame or honour:

[*Aside.*]

' *Lad.* Made you acquainted what an ample dowry
' The knowledge of these things would be unto you,
' Able alone to get you noble husbands
' At your return, and you thus to neglect it?
' Besides, you seeing what a curious nation
' Th' Italians are, what will they say of me?
The English lady cannot dress herself.
Here's a fine imputation on our country!
Well, go your ways, and stay i' the next room.
' This *fucus* was too coarse, too? it's no matter.'
Good Sir, you'll give 'em entertainment.

Volp.

Volp. The storm comes toward me.

Lady. How does my Volp?

Volp. Troubled with noise; I cannot sleep; I dreamt
That a strange fury enter'd now my house,
And with the dreadful tempest of her breath
Did cleave my roof afunder.

Lady. Believe me, and I
Had the most fearful dream, could I remember it——

Volp. Out on my fate! I ha' given her the occasion
How to torment me—she will tell me hers.

Lady. Methought, the golden mediocrity,
Polite, and delicate——

Volp. Oh, if you do love me,
No more! I sweat and suffer at the mention
Of any dream. Feel how I tremble yet.

Lady. Alas, good soul! the passion of the heart.
Seed-pearl were good now, boil'd with syrup of apples,
Tincture of gold, and coral, citron pills,
Your ellicampane root, myrobalanes——

Volp. Ah, me! I have ta'en a grasshopper by the wing.

Lady. Burnt silk and amber; you have muscadel
Good i' th' house——

Volp. You will not drink and part?

Lady. No, fear not that. I doubt we shall not get
Some English saffron (half a dram would serve)
Your sixteen cloves, a little musk, dry'd mints,
Bugloss, and barley-meal——

Volp. She's in again:
Before, I feign'd diseases; now, I have one.

Lady. And these applied with a right scarlet cloth——

Volp. Another flood of words! a very torrent!

Lady. Shall I, Sir, make you a poultice?

Volp. No, no, no!

I'm very well; you need prescribe no more.

Lady. I have a little studied physick; but now
I'm all for music, 'save, i' the forenoons,

'An hour or two for painting.' I would have

A lady, indeed, t' have all letters and arts,

Be able to discourse, to write, to paint,

But principal (as Plato holds) your music

'(And so does wise Pythagoras, I take it)

'Is your true rapture, when there is consent

' In face, in voice, and cloaths; and' is indeed
' Our sex's chiefest ornament.

Volp. The poet,
As old in time as Plato, and as knowing,
Says, That our highest female grace is silence.

Lady. Which o' your poets? Petrarch, or Tassio, or
Guerrini, Ariosto, Aretine, [Dante?
Cieco di Hadria? I have read them all.

Volp. Is every thing a cause to my distraction?

Lady. I think I ha' two or three of them about me.

Volp. The sun, the sea, will sooner both stand still,
Than her eternal tongue! nothing can 'scape it.

Lady. Here's Pastor Fido——

Volp. Profess obstinate silence;
That's now my safest.

Lady. All our English writers,
I mean such as are happy in th' Italian,
Will deign to steal out of this author ' mainly;
' Almost as much as from Montaigne,
' He has so modern and facile a vein,
' Fitting the time, and catching the court-ear;
' Your Petrarch is more passionate, yet he,
' In days of sonnetting, trusting them with much;
' Dante is hard, and few can understand him;
' But, for a desperate wit, there's Aretine,
' Only his pictures are a little obscene.'——
You mark me not.

Volp. Alas, my mind's perturb'd!

Lady. Why, in such cases, we must cure ourselves,
Make use of our philosophy——

Volp. Oh, me!

Lady. And as we find our passions do rebel,
Encounter them with reason, ' or divert them,
' By giving scope unto some other humour
' Of lesser danger; as, in politic bodies,
' There's nothing more doth overwhelm the judgment,
' And cloud the understanding, than too much
' Settling and fixing, and (as 'twere) subsiding
' Upon one object. For the incorporating
' Of these same outward things into that part
' Which we call mental, leaves some certain *facets*,
' That

‘ That stop the organs, and, as Plato says,
‘ Assassinate our knowledge.’

Volp. Now, the spirit
Of patience help me !

Lady. Come, in faith, I must
Visit you more a-days, and make you well.
Laugh and be lusty.

Volp. My good angels, save me !

Lady. There was but one sole man in all the world,
With whom I ere could sympathise, and he
Would lie you often three, four hours together,
To hear me speak, and be (sometime) so rapt
As he would answer me quite from the purpose,
Like you, and you are like him just. I’ll discourse
(An’t be but only, Sir, to bring you asleep)
How we did spend our time and loves together,
For some six years.

Volp. Oh, oh, oh, oh !

Lady. For we were *coetanei*, and brought up— [me !]

‘ *Volp.* Some power, some fate, some fortune, rescue
Enter Mosca.

Mos. God save you, Madam.

Lady. Good Sir——

Volp. Mosca, welcome,
Welcome, to my redemption !

Mos. Why, Sir ?

Volp. Oh !

Rid me of this my torture, quickly, there ;
My Madam, with the everlasting voice.

‘ The bells in time of pestilence ne’er made
‘ Like noise, or were in that perpetual motion.
‘ The cock-pit comes not near it. All my house,
‘ But now, steam’d like a bath with her thick breath.
‘ A lawyer could not have been heard, nor scarce
‘ Another woman, such a hail of words
‘ She has let fall.’ For hell’s sake, rid her hence.

Mos. Has she presented ?

Volp. Oh, I do not care !
I’ll take her absence upon any price,
With any loss.

Mos. Madam——

Lady. I ha' brought your patron
A toy, a cap here, of mine own work.

Mos. 'Tis well;

I had forgot to tell you, I saw your knight
Where you'd little think it.

Lady. Where?

Mos. Marry,

Where yet, if you make haste, you may apprehend him.
Rowing upon the water in a gondole,
With the most cunning courtesan of Venice.

Lady. Is't true?

Mos. Pursue them, and believe your eyes;
Leave me to make your gift.—[*Exit Lady.*—I knew
'twould take;

For lightly, they that use themselves most licence,
Are still most jealous.

Volp. Mosca, hearty thanks,
For thy quick fiction, and delivery of me.
Now, to my hopes, what say'st thou?

Re-enter Lady.

Lady. But, do you hear, Sir?

Volp. Again! I fear a paroxysm.

Lady. Which way
Row'd they together?

Mos. Toward the Rialto.

Lady. I pray you, lend me your dwarf.

Mos. I pray you, take him. [*Ex. Lady and Dwarf.*
Your hopes, Sir, are like happy blossoms, fair,
And promise timely fruit, if you will stay
But the maturing. Keep you at your couch;
Corbaccio will arrive straight with the will;
When he is gone, I'll tell you more.

Volp. My blood
And spirits are return'd; 'I am alive,
'And like your wanton gamester, at primero,
'Whose thought had whisper'd to him, not go less.
'Methinks, I lie,' and draw—for an encounter.

[*Lies on the couch.*

Enter Bonario.

Mos. Sir, here conceal'd you may hear all. But, pray you,
Have patience, Sir. [*One knocks.*] The same's your father
I am compell'd to leave you.

[*knocks.*

Bon.

Bon. Do so. Yet
Cannot my thought imagine this a truth.

Enter Corvino and Celia.

Mos. Death on me! You are come too soon. What
Did not I say I would send? [meant you!]

Corv. Yes; but I fear'd
You might forget it, and then they prevent us.

Mos. Prevent! Did e'er man haste so for his horns?
A courtier would not ply it so for a place. [*Aside.*
Well, now there's no helping it; stay here;
I'll presently return.

Corv. 'Where are you,' Celia?
You know not wherefore I have brought you hither?

Cel. Not well, except you told me.

Corv. Now I will:
Hark hither.

Mos. Sir, Your father hath sent word, [*To Bon.*
It will be half an hour ere he come:
And therefore if you'll please to walk the while
Into that gallery; at the upper end
There are some books, to entertain the time:
And I'll take care no man shall come unto you, Sir.

Bon. Yes, I'll stay there. I do doubt this fellow. [*Aside.*
[*Bonario retires.*

Mos. There, he is far enough; he can hear nothing:
And for his father, I can keep him off.

Corv. Nay, now there is no starting back; and there-
Resolve upon it. I have so decreed. [fore,
It must be done. Nor would mov't afore,
Because I would avoid all shifts and tricks
That might deny me.

Cel. Sir, let me beseech you,
Affect not these strange trials. If you doubt
My chastity, why, lock me up for ever;
Make me the heir of darkness; let me live
Where I may please your fears, if not your trust.

Corv. Believe it, I have no such humour, I;
All that I speak, I mean: yet I'm not mad.
Not horn mad, see you? Go to, shew yourself
Obedient, and a wife.

Cel. Oh, Heaven!

Corv. I say it.

Do so.

Cel. Was this the train?

Corv. I have told you reasons,
What the physicians have set down, how much
It may concern me, what my engagements are,
My means, and the necessity of those means,
For my recovery: wherefore, if you be
Loyal, and mine, be won, respect my venture:

Cel. Before your honour?

Corv. Honour! Tut, a breath;

'There's no such thing in nature; a mere term,
'Invented to awe fools.' What is my gold
The worse for touching? Cloaths for being look'd on?
Why, this's no more. An old decrepit wretch,
That has no sense, no sinew; 'takes his meat
'With others' fingers; only knows to gape,
'When you do scald his gums;' a voice, a shadow—
And what can this man hurt you?

Cel. Lord! what spirit
Is this has enter'd him?

Corv. And for your fame,
That's such a jig! as if I would go tell it,
Cry it on the Piazza. Who shall know it,
But he that cannot speak it, and this fellow,
Whose lips are i' my pocket, save yourself?
If you proclaim't, you may. I know no other
Should come to know it.

Cel. Are Heaven and saints then nothing?
Will they be blind or stupid?

Corv. How?

Cel. Good Sir,

Be jealous still; emulate them, and think
What hate they burn with toward every sin.

Corv. I grant you, if I thought it were a sin,
I would not urge you. Should I offer this
To some young Frenchman, or hot Tuscan blood,
'That had read Aretine, conn'd all his prints,
'Knew every quirk within lust's labyrinth,
'And were profess'd critic in lechery,
'And I would look upon him, and applaud him,'
This were a sin. But here 'tis contrary,

A pious work, mere charity for phytic,
And honest polity, to assure mine own.

Cel. Oh, Heaven! canst thou suffer such a change?

Volp. [*Aside to Mos.*] Thou art mine honour, Mosca,
and my pride,

My joy, my tickling, my delight! Go, bring 'em.

Mos. Please you, draw near, Sir.

Corv. Come on. What——

You will not be rebellious? By that light——

Mos. Sir, Signior Corvino here, is come to see you.

Volp. Oh!

Mos. And hearing of the consultation had,
So lately, for your health, is come to offer,
Or rather, Sir, to prostrate——

Corv. Thanks, sweet Mosca.

Mos. Freely, or unask'd,
His own most fair and proper wife; the beauty
Only of price in Venice——

Corv. 'Tis well urg'd.

Mos. To be your comfortress, and to preserve you.

Volp. Alas, I am past already! Pray you, thank him
For his good care and promptness; but for that,
'Tis a vain labour e'en to fight 'gainst Heaven;
Applying fire to a stone—Uh, uh, uh, uh!—
Making a dead leaf grow again. I take
His wishes gently, though; and you may tell him
What I have done for him. Marry, my state is hopeless!
Will him to pray for me, and t' use his fortune
With rev'rence, when he comes to it.

Mos. Do you hear, Sir?

Go to him with your wife.

Corv. Heart of my father!

Wilt thou persist thus? Come, I pray thee, come.
'Thou seest 'tis nothing, Celia. By this hand,
I shall grow violent. Come, do't, I say.

Cel. Sir, kill me, rather. I will take down poison,
Eat burning coals, do any thing——

Corv. Be damn'd!

Heart! I will drag thee hence, home by the hair,
Cry thee a strumpet through the streets, 'rip up
'Thy mouth unto thy ears, and slit thy nose,
'Like a raw rotchet.' Do not tempt me; come.

‘Yield—I am loth—Death! I will buy some slave,
 ‘Whom I will kill, and bind thee to him, alive,
 ‘And at my window hang you forth, devising
 ‘Some monstrous crime, which I, in capital letters,
 ‘Will eat into thy flesh with aqua fortis,
 ‘And burning corr’sives, on this stubborn breast.’
 Now, by the blood thou hast incens’d, I’ll do’t.

Cel. Sir, what you please, you may; I am your martyr.

Corv. Be not thus obstinate; I ha’ not deserv’d it.

Think who it is intreats you. Pr’ythee, sweet.

Good faith, thou shalt have jewels, gowns, attires,
 What thou wilt think, and ask. Do but go kifs him,
 Or touch him but. For my sake; at my suit;

‘This once. No, not! I shall remember this.

Will you disgrace me thus? Do you thirst my undoing?

Mos. Nay, gentle lady, be advis’d.

Corv. No, no;

She has watch’d her time. God’s precious! this is scurvy,
 ’Tis very scurvy; and you are——

Mos. Nay, good Sir——

Corv. An errant locust, by Heaven, a locust, whose,
 Crocodile, that hast thy tears prepar’d,
 Expecting how thou’lt bid them flow.

Mos. Nay, pray you, Sir.

She will consider.

Cel. Would my life would serve
 To satisfy!

Corv. ’Sdeath! if she would but speak to him,
 And save my reputation, ’twere somewhat;
 But spitefully to affect my utter ruin——

Mos. ‘Ay, now you ha’ put your fortune in her hands.’
 Why, i’faith, it is her modesty; I must quit her.
 If you were absent, she would be more coming?
 I know it, and dare undertake for her.
 What woman can before her husband? Pray you,
 Let us depart, and leave her here.

Corv. Sweet Celia!

Thou may’st redeem all yet. I’ll say no more.
 If not, esteem yourself as lost. Nay, stay there.

[*Exeunt Corv. and Mos.*

Cel. Oh, Heav’n, and his good angels! whither, whi-
 Is shame fled human breasts, that with such ease [ther,
 Men

Men dare put off your honours and their own ?

Is ' that which ever was a cause of life,

' Now plac'd beneath the basest circumstance ?

' And' modesty an exile made, for money ?

Volp. Ay, in Corvino, and such earth-fed minds,

[He leaps off from his couch.]

That never tasted the true heav'n of love.

Assure thee, Celia, he that would sell thee,

' Only for hope of gain, and that uncertain,'

He would have sold his part of Paradise

' For ready money, had he met a cope-man.'

Why art thou 'maz'd to see me thus reviv'd ?

' Rather applaud thy beauties, miracle !'

'Tis thy great work, that hath, not now alone,

But sundry times, rais'd me, in several shapes,

And but this morning, like a mountebank,

To see thee at thy window. I, before

I would have left my practice, for thy love,

In varying figures I would have contended

With the blue Proteus, or the horned flood.

Now art thou welcome.

Cel. Sir !

Volp. Nay, fly me not,

Nor let thy false imagination

'That I was bed-rid, make thee think I am so :

Thou shalt not find it. ' I am now as fresh,

' As hot, as high, and in as jovial plight,

' As when (in that so celebrated scene,

' At recitation of our comedy,

' For entertainment of the great Valois)

' I acted young Antinous, and attracted

' The eyes and ears of all the ladies present,

' T' admire each graceful gesture, note, and footing.

' S O N G.'

Come, my Celia, let us prove,

While we can, the sports of love ;

' Time will not be ours for ever,

' He, at length, our good will sever.

' Spend not then his gifts in vain ;

' Suns that set may rise again :

' But

- ' But if once we lose this light,
 ' 'Tis with us perpetual night.
 ' Why should we defer our joys?
 ' Fame and rumour are but toys.
 ' Cannot we delude the eyes
 ' Of a few poor household spies;
 ' Or his easier ears beguile,
 ' Thus removed by our wile?
 ' 'Tis no sin love's fruits to steal;
 ' But the sweet theft's to reveal;
 ' To be taken, to be seen,
 ' These have crimes accounted been.'

Col. Some syren blast me, or dire lightning strike
This my offending face!

Volp. Why droops my Celia?
Thou hast, in place of a base husband, found
A worthy lover. ' Use thy fortune well,
' With secrecy and pleasure.' See, behold
What thou art queen of; not in expectation,
As I feed others, but possess'd and crown'd.
See here a rope of pearl, and each more orient
Than that the brave Ægyptian Queen carous'd:
Dissolve, and drink them. ' See, a carbuncle,
' May put out both the eyes of our St. Mark;
' A diamond, would have bought Laullia Paulina,
' When she came in, like star-light, hid with jewels,
' That were the spoils of provinces; take these,
' And wear, and lose 'em. Yet remains an ear-ring
' To purchase them again, and this whole state.'
A gem but worth a private patrimony
Is nothing; we will eat such at a meal.
The heads of parrots, tongues of nightingales,
The brains of peacocks, and of ostriches,
Shall be our food; and could we get the phoenix,
(Though nature lost her kind) she were our dish.

Col. Good Sir, these things might move a mind affected
With such delights; but I, whose innocence
Is all I can think wealthy, or worth th' enjoying,
' And which, once lost, I have nought to lose beyond it,'
Cannot be taken with these sensual baits.
If you have conscience ———

Volp. 'Tis the beggar's virtue.

If thou hast wisdom, hear me, Celia.

' Thy baths shall be the juice of July-flowers,
' Spirits of roses, and of violets,
' The milk of unicorns, and panthers' breath,
' Gather'd in bags, and mix'd with Cretan wines :
' Our drink shall be prepared gold and amber,
' Which we will take until my roof whirl round
' With the vertigo ; and my dwarf shall dance,
' My eunuch sing, my fool make up the antic.'

Let us, in changed shapes, act Ovid's tales,

Thou like Europa now, and I like Jove,

Then I like Mars, and thou like Erycine ;

' So of the rest, till we have quite run through,

' And wearied all the fables of the gods.

' Then will I have thee in more modern forms,

' Attired like some sprightly dame of France,

' Brave Tuscan lady, or proud Spanish beauty ;

' Sometimes unto the Persian Sophi's wife,

' Or the Grand Signior's mistress ; and, for change,

' To one of our most artful courtezans,

' Or some quick Negro, or cold Russian :

And I will meet thee in a thousand forms,

Where we may so transfuse our wand'ring souls

Out at our lips, and score up sums of pleasures,

' That the curious shall not know

' How to tell them as they flow ;

' And the envious, when they find

' What their number is, be pin'd.'

Cel. If you have ears or heart that may be touch'd,

' If you have eyes that can be open'd,

' Or any part that yet sounds man about you :

' If you have touch of holy faints, or Heaven,

Do me the grace to let me 'scape ; if not,

Be bountiful, and kill me. You do know

I am a creature hither ill betray'd ;

By one whose shame I would forget it were.

If you will deign me neither of these graces,

Yet feed your wrath, Sir, rather than your appetite ;

' (It is a vice comes nearer manlinefs)'

And punish that unhappy crime of nature.

Which

Which you miscall my beauty: 'flay my face,
 ' Or poison it with ointments, for seducing
 ' Your blood to this rebellion; rub these hands
 ' With what may cause an eating leprosy,
 ' E'en to my bones and marrow:' any thing
 That may disfavour me, save in mine honour:
 And I will kneel to you, pray for you, pay down
 A thousand hourly vows, Sir, for your health,
 Report, and think you virtuous.

Volp. Think me cold,
 Frozen, and impotent, and so report me;
 ' That I had Nestor's *hernia* thou wouldst think.'
 I do degenerate, and abuse my nation,
 To play with opportunity thus long.
 ' I should have done the act, and then have parly'd.'
 Yield, or I'll force thee.

Cel. Oh, just God!

Volp. In vain——

[*Bonario leaps out from where Mosca had placed him.*]

Bon. Forbear, foul ravisher! 'libidinous swine!'
 Free the forc'd lady, or thou dy'st, impostor!
 But that I am loth to snatch the punishment
 Out of the hand of justice, thou shouldst yet
 Be made the timely sacrifice of vengeance
 Before this altar, and this dross, thy idol.
 Lady, let's quit the place; it is the den
 Of villainy. Fear nought; you have a guard:
 And he, ere long, shall meet his just reward.

[*Exeunt Celia and Bon.*]

Volp. Fall on me, roof, and bury me in ruin!
 Become my grave, that wert my shelter!—Oh,
 I am unmask'd, unspirited, undone,
 Betray'd to beggary, to infamy!——

Enter Mosca.

Mos. Where shall I run, most wretched shame of men,
 To beat out my unlucky brains!

Volp. Here, here——

What, dost thou bleed?

Mos. Oh, that his well-driv'n sword
 Had been so courteous to have cleft me now
 ' Up to the navel,' ere I liv'd to see

My

My life, my hopes, my spirits, my patron, all
Thus desperately engaged, by my error!

Volp. Woe on thy fortune!

Mos. And my follies, Sir.

Volp. Th' hast made me miserable.

Mos. And myself, Sir.

Who would have thought he would have hearken'd so?

Volp. What shall we do?

Mos. I know not. If my heart
Could expiate the mischance, I'd pluck it out.

Will you be pleas'd to hang me, or cut my throat?

And I'll requite you, Sir. Let's die like Romans,
Since we have liv'd like Grecians.

Volp. Hark! who's there? [*Knocking without.*]

I hear some footing—Officers; the sassi,
Come to apprehend us. I do feel the brand
Hissing already at my forehead—now
Mine ears are boring——

Mos. To your couch, Sir; you
Make that place good, however. Guilty men
Suspect what they deserve still. [*Aside.*] Signior Corbaccio!

Enter Corbaccio.

Corb. Why, how now, Mosca?

Mos. Oh, undone, amaz'd, Sir!
Your son, (I know not by what accident)
Acquainted with your purpose to my patron,
Touching your will, and making him your heir,
Enter'd our house with violence, his sword drawn;
Sought for you, call'd you wretch, unnatural,
Vow'd he would kill you——

Corb. Me!

Mos. Yes, and my patron.

Corb. This act shall disinherit him indeed.
Here is the will.

Mos. 'Tis well, Sir.

Corb. Right and well.

Be you as careful now for me.

Mos. My life, Sir,
Is not more tender'd. I am only yours.

Corb. How does he? Will he die shortly, think'st thou?

Mos. I fear he'll out-last May.

Corb. To-day!

Mos. No, last out May, Sir.

Corb. Couldst thou not gi' him a dram?

Mos. Oh, by no means, Sir!

Corb. Nay, I'll not bid you.

Enter Voltore.

Volt. This is a knave, I see.

Mos. How, Signior Voltore! Did he hear me? [*Aside.*

Volt. Parasite.

Mos. Who's that? Oh, Sir, most timely welcome!

Volt. Scarce, to the discovery of your tricks, I fear.

You are his only, and mine also, are you not?

Mos. Who, I, Sir?

Volt. You, Sir. What device is this,
About a will?

Mos. A plot for you, Sir.

Volt. Come,

Put not your tricks upon me; I shall scent them.

Mos. Did you not hear it?

Volt. Yes, I hear Corbaccio

Hath made your patron there his heir.

Mos. 'Tis true.

By my device, drawn to it by my plot,
With hope——

Volt. Your patron should reciprocate?

And you have promis'd?

Mos. For your good I did, Sir:

Nay more, I told his son, brought, hid him here,

Where he might hear his father pass the deed;

Being persuaded to it by th's thought, Sir,

That the unnaturalness, first, of the act,

And then his father's oft disclaiming in him,

(Which I did mean t' help on) would sure enrage him

To do some violence upon his parent,

On which the law should take sufficient hold,

And you be stated in a double hope.

Truth be my comfort and my conscience,

My only aim was to dig you a fortune

Out of these two old rotten sepulchres——

Volt. I cry thee mercy, Mosca!

Mos. Worth your patience,

And your great merit, Sir. And see the change!

Volt. Why, what success?

Mos.

Mos. Most hapless ! You must help, Sir.
Whilst we expected the old raven, in comes
Corvino's wife, sent hither by her husband——

Volt. What, with a present ?

Mos. No, Sir, on visitation ;
(I'll tell you how anon) and staying long,
The youth he grows impatient, rushes forth,
Seizeth the lady, wounds me, makes her swear
(Or he would murder her, that was his vow)
T' affirm my patron to have done her rape,
Which how unlike it is, you see ; and hence,
With that pretext, he's gone t' accuse his father,
Defame my patron, defeat you——

Volt. Where's her husband ?

Let him be sent for straight.

Mos. Sir, I'll go fetch him.

Volt. Bring him to the Scrutineo.

Mos. Sir, I will.

Volt. This must be stopp'd.

Mos. Oh, you do nobly, Sir !

Alas, 'twas labour'd all, Sir, for your good !
Nor was there want of counsel in the plot.
But fortune can at any time o'erthrow
The projects of a hundred learned clerks, Sir.

Corb. What's that ?

Volt. Will't please you, Sir, to go along ?

Mos. Patron, go in, and pray for our success.

Volp. Need makes devotion : Heaven your labour
bless.' [Exeunt.

END of the THIRD ACT.

A C T IV.

SCENE, *the Street.*

Enter Politick and Peregrine.

POLITICK.

I Told you, Sir, it was a plot ; you see
What observation is. You mention'd me
For some instructions. I will tell you, Sir,
' (Since we are met here in the height of Venice)'

Some few particulars I have set down,
 Only for this meridian, fit to be known
 Of your crude traveller, and they are these.
 I will not touch, Sir, at your phrase, or cloaths,
 For they are old.

Per. Sir, I have better.

Pol. Pardon;

I meant as they are themes.

Per. Oh, Sir, proceed!

‘ I’ll slander you no more of wit, good Sir.

‘ *Pol.* First, for your garb, it must be grave and serious,

‘ Very reserv’d and lock’d; not tell a secret

‘ On any terms, not to your father, scarce

‘ A fable, but with caution; make sure choice

‘ Both of your company and discourse; beware

‘ You never speak a truth——

‘ *Per.* How!

‘ *Pol.* Not to strangers;

‘ For those be they you must converse with most:

‘ Others I would not know, Sir, but at distance,

‘ So as I still might be a savor in them;

‘ You shall have tricks else pass’d upon you hourly.

‘ And then, for your religion, profess none,

‘ But wonder at the diversity of all;

‘ And, for your part, protest, were there no other

‘ But simply the laws o’ th’ land, you could content you.

‘ Nic Machiavel, and Monsieur Bodine, both

‘ Were of this mind. Then you must learn the use

‘ And handling of your silver fork at meals,

‘ The metal of your glass, (these are main matters

‘ With your Italian) and to know the hour

‘ When you must eat your melons and your figs.

‘ *Per.* Is that a point of state too?

‘ *Pol.* Here it is;

‘ For your Venetian, if he see a man

‘ Preposterous in the least, he has him straight;

‘ He has; he strips him. I’ll acquaint you, Sir;

‘ I now have liv’d here—’tis some fourteen months—

‘ Within the first week of my landing here,

‘ All took me for a citizen of Venice,

‘ I knew the forms so well.

‘ *Per.* And nothing else,

[*Aside.*

‘ *Pol.*

‘ *Pol.* I had read Contarene, took me a house,
 ‘ Dealt with my Jews to furnish it with moveables—
 ‘ Well, if I could but find one man, one man
 ‘ To mine own heart, whom I durst trust, I would——

‘ *Per.* What, what, Sir?

‘ *Pol.* Make him rich, make him a fortune;
 He should not think again. I would command it.

‘ *Per.* As how?

‘ *Pol.* With certain projects that I have,
 ‘ Which I may not discover.

‘ *Per.* If I had

‘ But one to wager with, I would lay odds now,
 ‘ He tells me instantly.

[*Aside.*

‘ *Pol.* One is (and that
 ‘ I care not greatly who knows) to serve the state
 ‘ Of Venice with red herrings for three years,
 ‘ And at a certain rate, from Rotterdam,
 ‘ Where I have correspondence. There’s a letter,
 ‘ Sent me from one o’ the states, and to that purpose;
 ‘ He cannot write his name, but that’s his mark.

‘ *Per.* He is a chandler.

‘ *Pol.* No, a cheesemonger.

‘ There are some others too, with whom I treat
 ‘ About the same negotiation;
 ‘ And I will undertake it: for ’tis thus;
 ‘ I’ll do’t with ease; I have cast it all. Your hoy
 ‘ Carries but three men in her and a boy,
 ‘ And she shall make me three returns a year:
 ‘ So if there come but one of three, I save;
 ‘ If two, I can defalck. But this is now,
 ‘ If my main project fail.

‘ *Per.* Then you have others?

‘ *Pol.* I should be loth to draw the subtil air
 ‘ Of such a place, without my thousand aims,
 ‘ I’ll not dissemble, Sir. Where’er I come,
 ‘ I love to be considerative; and, ’tis true,
 ‘ I have at my free hours thought upon
 ‘ Some certain goods unto the state of Venice,
 ‘ Which I do call my cautions; and, Sir, which
 ‘ I mean (in hope of pension) to propound
 ‘ To the great counsel, then unto the forty,
 ‘ So to the ten. My means are made already——

‘ *Per.* By whom ?

‘ *Pol.* Sir, that though his place b’ obscure,

• Yet he can sway, and they will hear him. He’s

• A commandadore.

‘ *Per.* What, a common serjeant ?

‘ *Pol.* Sir, such as they are put it in their mouths,

• What they should say, sometimes, as well as greater.

• I think I have my notes to shew you.

‘ *Per.* Good Sir.

‘ *Pol.* But you shall swear unto me, on your gentry,

• Not to anticipate——

‘ *Per.* I, Sir ?

‘ *Pol.* Nor reveal

• A circumstance. My paper is not with me.

‘ *Per.* Oh, but you can remember, Sir.

‘ *Pol.* My first is

• Concerning tinder-boxes. You must know,

• No family is here without its box.

• Now, Sir, it being so portable a thing,

• Put case, that you or I were ill-affected

• Unto the state, Sir ; with it in our pockets,

• Might not I go into the arsenal,

• Or you, come out again, and none the wiser ?

‘ *Per.* Except yourself, Sir.

‘ *Pol.* Go to then. I therefore

• Advertise to the state, how fit it were,

• That none but such as were known patriots,

• Sound lovers of their country, should be suffer’d

• T’ enjoy them in their houses, and even those

• Seal’d at some office, and at such a bigness

• As might not lurk in pockets.

‘ *Per.* Admirable !

‘ *Pol.* My next is, how t’ enquire, and be resolv’d,

• By present demonstration, whether a ship,

• Newly arriv’d from Soria, or from

• Any suspected part of all the Levant,

• Be guilty of the plague ; and where they use

• To lie out forty, fifty days sometimes,

• About the Lazaretto for their trial,

• I’ll save that charge and loss unto the merchant,

• And in an hour clear the doubt.

‘ *Per.* Indeed, Sir !

‘ *Pol.* Or——I will lose my labour.

‘ *Per.*

‘ *Per.* My faith, that’s much.

‘ *Pol.* Nay, Sir, conceive me. ’Twill cost me in
Some thirty livres—— [onions

‘ *Per.* Which is one pound sterling.

‘ *Pol.* Beside my water-works; for this I do, Sir.

‘ First, I bring in your ship ’twixt two brick walls;

‘ (But those the state shall venture) on the one

‘ I strain me a fair tarpaulin, and in that

‘ I stick my onions, cut in halves; the other

‘ Is full of loop-holes, out at which I thrust

‘ The noses of my bellows, and those bellows

‘ I keep, with water-works, in perpetual motion.

‘ (Which is the easiest matter of a hundred)

‘ Now, Sir, your onion, which doth naturally

‘ Attract th’ infection, and our bellows blowing

‘ The air upon him, will shew (instantly)

‘ By his chang’d colour, if there be contagion,

‘ Or else remain as fair as at the first.

‘ Now, ’tis known, ’tis nothing.

‘ *Per.* You are right, Sir.

‘ *Pol.* I would I had my note.

‘ *Per.* Faith, so would I.

‘ But you ha’ done well for once, Sir.

‘ *Pol.* Were I false,

‘ Or would be made so, I could shew you reasons

‘ How I could sell this state now to the Turk,

‘ Spite of their gallies, or their——

‘ *Per.* Pray you, Sir Pol.

‘ *Pol.* I have ’em not about me.

‘ *Per.* That I fear’d, Sir.

‘ They are there, Sir.

‘ *Pol.* No, this is my diary,

‘ Wherein I note my actions of the day.

‘ *Per.* Pray you, let’s see, Sir. What is here? *Notandum,*

‘ A rat had gnaw’d my spur-leathers; notwithstanding,

‘ I put on new and did go forth; but first

‘ I threw three beans over the threshold. *Item,*

‘ I went and bought tooth-picks, whereof one

‘ I burst immediately, in a discourse

‘ With a Dutch merchant, ’bout *Ragione del Stato.*

‘ From him I went and paid a moccinigo

‘ For piecing my silk stockings; by the way

‘ I cheapen’d sprats ; and at St. Mark’s I urin’d.

‘ Faith these are politic notes !

‘ *Pol.* Sir, I do slip

‘ No action of my life thus, but I quote it.

‘ *Per.* Believe me, it is wise !

‘ *Pol.* Nay, Sir, read forth.’

Enter Lady, Nano, and Women.

Lady. Where should this loose knight be trow ? Sure
he’s hous’d.

Nano. Why ; then he’s fast.

Lady. Ay, he plays bo-peep with me.

I pray you stay. This heat will do more harm

To my complexion, than his heart is worth.

(I do not care to hinder, but to take him.)

How it comes off.

Wom. My master’s yonder.

Lady. Where ?

Wom. With a young gentleman.

Lady. That fame’s the party,

In man’s apparel. ‘Pray you, Sir, jog my knight :

I will be tender to his reputation,

However he demerit.

Pol. My lady !

Per. Where ?

Pol. ‘Tis she indeed, Sir ; you shall know her. ‘ She is,

‘ Were she not mine, a lady of that merit,

‘ For fashion and behaviour, and for beauty

‘ I durst compare——

‘ *Per.* It seems you are not jealous,

‘ That dare commend her.

‘ *Pol.* Nay, and for discourse——

‘ *Per.* Being your wife, she cannot miss that.’

Pol. Madam,

Here is a gentleman, ‘pray you use him fairly ;

He seems a youth, but he is——

Lady. None.

‘ *Pol.* Yes, one

‘ Has put his face as soon into the world.—

‘ *Lady.* You mean as early ? but to day ?’

Pol. How’s this !

Lady. Why in this habit, Sir, you apprehend me.

Well, Master Would-be, this doth not become you ;

I had thought, the odour, Sir, of your good name
 Had been more precious to you; that you would not
 Have done this dire massacre on your honour;
 One of your gravity, and rank besides!
 But knights, I see, care little for the oath
 They make to ladies: chiefly, their own ladies.

Pol. Now, by my spurs, the symbol of my knight-
 hood——

Per. Lord, how his brain is humbled for an oath!

[*Aside.*

Pol. I reach you not.

Lady. Right, Sir, your polity
 May bear it through thus. Sir, a word with you.
 I would be loth to contest publickly
 With any gentlewoman, or to seem
 Froward or violent, (as the courtier says)
 It comes too near rusticity in a lady,
 Which I would shun by all means; and however
 I may deserve from Mr. Would-be, yet
 T'have one fair gentlewoman thus be made
 Th'unkind instrument to wrong another,
 And one she knows not; ay, and to persevere;
 In my poor judgment, is not warranted.
 From being a solecism in our sex,
 If not in manners.

Per. How is this!

Pol. Sweet Madam,
 Come nearer to your aim.

Lady. Marry, and I will, Sir.
 Since you provoke me with your impudence,
 And laughter of your land-siren here,
 Your sporus, your hermaphrodite——

Per. What's here?

Poetic fury, and historic storms!

Pol. The gentleman, believe it, is of worth,
 And of our nation.

Lady. Ay, your White Friars nation!
 Come, I blush for you, Master Would-be, ay;
 And am ashamed you should ha' no more forehead,
 Than thus to be the patron, 'or St. George,'
 To a lewd harlot, 'a brags fricatrice,'
 A female devil in a male out-side.

Pol.

Pol. Nay,
And you be such a one, I must bid adieu
To your delights. The case appears too liquid.

Lady. Ay, you may carry't clear, with your state-face,
But for your wench,

' Who here is fled for liberty of conscience,

' From furious persecution of the marshal,'

Her will I disc'ple.

[*Exit Pol.*

Per. This is fine, i'faith !
And do you use this often ? Is this part
Of your wits exercise, 'gainst you have occasion ?
Madam——

Lady. Go to, Sir !

Per. Do you hear me, lady ?
Why, if your knight have set you to beg shirts,
Or to invite me home, you might have done it
A nearer way by far.

Lady. This cannot work you
Out of my snare.

Per. Why ? Am I in it, then ?
Indeed your husband told me your were fair,
And so you are ; only your nose inclines
(That side that's next the sun) to the queen apple.

Lady. This cannot be endur'd, by any patience.

Enter Mosca.

Mos. What's the matter, Madam ?

Lady. If the senate
Right not my request in this, I will protest 'em
To all the world, no aristocracy.

Mos. What is the injury, Lady ?

Lady. Why the caller
You told me of, here I have ta'en disguis'd. [*creature*

Mos. Who ? this ? what means your Ladyship ? The
I mentioned to you, is apprehended, now,
Before the senate ; you shall see her.——

Lady. Where ?

Mos. I'll bring you to her. This young gentleman,
I saw him land this morning at the port.

Lady. Is't possible ! how has my judgment wander'd ?
Sir, I must, blushing, say to you, I have err'd ;
And plead your pardon.

Per. What, more changes yet ?

Lady.

Lady. I hope you ha' not the malice to remember
A gentlewoman's passion. If you stay
In Venice here, please you to use me, Sir——

Mos. Will you go, Madam?

Lady. 'Pray you, Sir, use me. In faith,
The more you see me, the more I shall conceive
You have forgot our quarrel. [*Exeunt Mosca and Lady.*]

Per. This is rare!

Sir Politick Would-be! No, Sir Politic Bawd!

To bring me thus acquainted with his wife!

'Well, wife Sir Pol, since you have practis'd thus

'Upon my freshman-ship, I'll try your salt-head,

'What proof it is against a counter-plot.' [*Exit.*]

Enter Voltore, Corbaccio, Corvino, and Mosca.

Volt. Well, now you know the carriage of the busi-
Your constancy is all that is requir'd [*nest.*]
Unto the safety of it.

Mos. Is the lie

Safely convey'd amongst us? is that sure?

Knows every man his burthen?

Corv. Yes.

Mos. Then shrink not.

Corv. But knows the advocate the truth?

Mos. O, Sir,

By no means. I devis'd a formal tale,

That sav'd your reputation. But be valiant, Sir.

Corv. I fear no one but him, that this his pleading
Should make him stand for a co-heir——

Mos. Co-halter!

Hang him, we will, but use his tongue, his voice,
As we do croakers here.

Corv. Ay, what shall he do?

Mos. When we ha' done, you mean?

Corv. Yes.

Mos. Why, we'll think:

Sell him for mummia, he's half dust already.

Do you not smile, to see this buffalo. [*To Voltore.*]

How he doth sport it with his head?—I should

If all were well and past. Sir, only you

[*To Corbaccio.*]

Are

Are he that shall enjoy the crop of all,
And these not know for whom they toil.

Corb. Ay, peace.

Mos. But you shall eat it.

[*To Corvino.*

Much worshipful Sir,

[*To Voltore.*

Mercury sit upon your thundering tongue,

‘ Or the French Hercules, and make your language

‘ As conquering as his club, to beat along

‘ (As with a tempest) flat, our adversaries ;

‘ But much more yours, Sir.’

Volt. Here they come, ha’ done.

Mos. I have another witness, if you need, Sir,
I can produce.

Volt. Who is it?

Mos. Sir, I have her.

*Enter four Avocatori, Bonario, Celia, Notario,
and Commendadori.*

1st. Avoc. The like of this the senate never heard of.

2d. Avoc. ‘ ’Twill come most strange to them, when
we report it.’

The gentlewoman has been ever held
Of unproved name.

3d. Avoc. So the young man.

2d. Avoc. The more unnatural part that of his father.

3d. Avoc. More of the husband.

1st. Avoc. I not know to give

His act a name, it is so monstrous !

2d. Avoc. But the impostor, he is a thing created
T’ exceed example !

‘ *1st. Avoc.* And all after times !

‘ *2d. Avoc.* I never heard a true voluptuary
‘ Describ’d, but him.’

1st Avoc. Appear yet those were cited ?

Nota. All but the old magnifico, Volpone.

1st Avoc. Why is not he here ?

Mos. Please your fatherhoods,

Here is his advocate :

So feeble——

2d. Avoc. What are you ?

Bon. His parasite,

His knave, his pandar. I beseech the court,

He may be forc'd to come, that your grave eyes
May bear strong witness of his strange impostures.

Vol. Upon my faith and credit, with your virtues,
He is not able to endure the air.

2d Avoc. Bring him, however.

1st Avoc. We will see him.

2d Avoc. Fetch him.

Vol. Your fatherhoods fit pleasures be obey'd ;
But sure, the sight will rather move your pities,
Than indignation : may it please the court,
In the mean time, he may be heard in me.

' I know this place most void of prejudice,
' And therefore crave it, since we have no reason
' To fear our truth should hurt our cause.'

3d Avoc. Speak free.

Vol. Then know, most honour'd fathers, I must now
Discover to your strangely abused ears,
The most prodigious and most frontless piece
Of solid impudence, and treachery,
That ever vicious nature yet brought forth
To shame the state of Venice. This lewd woman
(That wants no artificial looks, or tears,
To help the vizard she has now put on)
Hath long been known a close adulteress
To that lascivious youth there ; not suspected,
I say, but known, discovered, detected,
' With him ;' and by this man, the easy husband,
Pardon'd ; ' whose timely bounty makes him now
' Stand here, the most unhappy, innocent person
' That ever man's own goodness made accus'd.
' For these, not knowing how to owe a gift
' Of that dear grace, but with their shame ; being plac'd
' So above all others of their gratitude
' Began to hate the benefit ; and, in place
' Of thanks, devise t' extirp' the memory
' Of such an act : wherein I pray your fatherhoods
' T' observe the malice, yea, the rage of creatures,
' Discover'd in their evils, and what heart
' Such take, even from their crimes.' But that anon
Will more appear. This gentleman, the father,
Hearing of this foul fact, with many others,
Which daily struck at his too tender ears,

‘ And griev’d in nothing more than that he could not
 ‘ Preserve himself a parent’ (his son’s ill,
 Growing to that strange flood) at last decreed
 To disinherit him.

1st Avoc. These be strange turns ! [nest.

2d Avoc. The young man’s fame was ever fair and ho-

Vol. So much more full of danger is his vice,

That can beguile so, under shade of virtue.

But, as I said (my honour’d sires) his father

Having this settled purpose (by what means

To him betray’d, we know not) and this day

Appointed for the deed ; that parricide

(I cannot stile him better) by confederacy,

Preparing this his paramour to be there,

Entered Volpone’s house (who was the man,

Your fatherhoods must understand, design’d

For the inheritance) there, sought his father :

But with what purpose sought he him my Lords ?

(I tremble to pronounce it, that a son

Unto a father, and to such a father,

Should have so foul, felonious intent)

It was to murder him—when being prevented

By his more happy absence, what then did he ?

‘ Not check his wicked thoughts ; no, now new deeds ;

‘ (Mischief doth ever end where it begins)’

An act of horror, fathers ! He dragg’d forth

The aged gentleman that had there lain bed-rid

Three years or more, out of his innocent couch,

Naked upon the floor, there left him ; wounded

His servant in the face ; and with this strumpet,

The stale to his forg’d practice, who was glad

To be so active ‘ (I shall here desire

‘ Your fatherhoods to note but my collections

‘ As most remarkable)’ thought at once to stop

His father’s ends, discredit his free choice

In the old gentleman, redeem themselves,

By laying infamy upon this man,

To whom, with blushing, they should owe their lives.

1st Avoc. What proofs have you of this ?

Bon. Most honour’d fathers,

I humbly crave there be no credit given,

To this man’s mercenary tongue.

2d Avoc.

2 *Avoc.* Forbear.

Bon. His soul moves in his fee.

3 *Avoc.* O, Sir !

Bon. This fellow

For six fous more, would plead against his Maker.

1 *Avoc.* You do forget yourself.

Vol. Nay, nay, grave fathers,

Let him have scope : can any man imagine
That he will spare his accuser, that would not
Have spar'd his parent ?

1 *Avoc.* Well, produce your proofs.

‘ *Cel.* I would I could forget I were a creature.’

Vol. Signior Corbaccio !

2 *Avoc.* What's he ?

Vol. The father.

3 *Avoc.* Has he had an oath ?

Not. Yes.

Corb. What must I do now ?

Not. Your testimony's crav'd.

Corb. Speak to the knave !

I'll ha' my mouth first stopp'd with earth ; my heart
Abhors his knowledge : I disclaim him.

1 *Avoc.* But for what cause ?

Corb. The meer portent of nature :

He is an utter stranger to my loins.

Bon. Have they made you to this !

Corb. I will not hear thee,

Moniter of men, swine, goat, wolf, parricide,
Speak not, thou viper.

Bon. Sir, I will be silent,
And rather wish my innocence should suffer,
Than I resist the authority of a father.

2 *Avoc.* This is strange !

Vol. Signior Corvino !

1 *Avoc.* Who's this ?

Not. The husband.

2 *Avoc.* Is he sworn ?

Not. He is.

3 *Avoc.* Speak then.

[strumpet.

Corv. This woman, please your fatherhoods, is a
Let me preserve the honour of the court
And modesty of your most reverend ears ;

Yet let me swear, I know her for a wanton ;
I've prov'd her false with that same voluptuary,
Yon fine well-timber'd gallant.

Mos. Excellent, Sir !

[*Celia faints.*]

2 Avoc. Look to the woman.

Corv. Rare ! Prettily feign'd ! Again !

3 Avoc. Stand from about her.

1 Avoc. Give her the air.

3 Avoc. What can you say ?

Mos. My wound

(May't please your wisdoms) speaks for me, receiv'd
In aid of my good patron, when he mis'd
His sought-for father, when that well-taught dame
Had her cue given her, to cry out a rape.

Bon. O, most laid impudence ! Fathers——

1 Avoc. Sir, be silent ;

You had your hearing free, so must they theirs.

3 Avoc. I do begin to doubt th' imposture here.

2 Avoc. This woman has too many moods.

Volt. Grave fathers,

She is a creature of a most profest
And prostituted lewdness.

Corv. Most impetuous !

Unsatisfied, grave fathers !

Volt. May her feignings

Not take your wisdoms : but this day she baited
A stranger, a grave knight, with her loose eyes
And more lascivious kisses. This man saw 'em
Together on the water, in a gondole.

Mos. Here is the lady herself, that saw 'em too,
Without ; who then had in the open streets
Pursu'd them, but for saving her knight's honour.

1 Avoc. Produce that lady.

2 Avoc. Let her come.

3 Avoc. These things,

They strike with wonder.

4 Avoc. I am turn'd a stone.

Enter Lady.

Mos. Be resolute, Madam.

Lady. Ay, this same is she.

Out, thou camelion harlot ; now thine eyes

Vie tears with the Hyæna : dar'st thou look
Upon my wronged face ? I cry your pardons,
I fear I have, forgettingly, transgressed
Against the dignity of the court.

2 *Avoc.* No, Madam.

Lady. And been exorbitant —

2 *Avoc.* You have not, Lady.

4 *Avoc.* These proofs are strong.?

Lady. Surely, I had no purpose
To scandalize your honours, or my sex's.

3 *Avoc.* We do believe it.

Lady. Surely, you may believe it.

2 *Avoc.* Madam, we do.

Lady. Indeed you may ; my breeding
Is not so coarse —

2 *Avoc.* We know it.

Lady. To offend

With pertinacy —

3 *Avoc.* Lady —

Lady. Such a presence !

No, surely.

1 *Avoc.* We well think it.

Lady. You may think it.

1 *Avoc.* Let her o'ercome. What witnesses have you
To make good your report ?

Bon. Our consciences.

Cel. And heaven, that never fails the innocent.

2 *Avoc.* These are no testimonies.

Bon. Not in your courts,

Where multitude and clamour overcome.

1 *Avoc.* Nay, then you wax insolent.

Volt. Here, here,

[*Volpone is brought in as impotent.*]

The testimony comes, that will convince,
And put to utter dumbness their bold tongues.
See here, grave fathers, here's the ravisher,
' The rider on men's wives,' the great impostor,
The grand voluptuary ! Do you not think
These limbs ' should affect venery ?' or these eyes
Covet a concubine ? Pray you, mark these hands,
Are they not fit to stroke a lady's breasts ?
Perhaps he doth dissemble ?

Bon. So he does.

Vol. Would you ha' him tortur'd ?

Bon. I would have him prov'd.

Vol. Best try him then with goads or burning irons ;

' Put him to the strappado : I have heard

' The rack hath cur'd the gout ; 'faith, give it him,

' And help him of a malady ; be courteous.'

I'll undertake, before these honour'd fathers,

He shall have yet as many left diseases,

As she has known adulteries, or thou harlots.

O, my most equal hearers, if these deeds,

Acts of this bold and most exorbitant stain,

May pass with sufferance, what one citizen

But owes the forfeit of his life, yea, fame,

To him that dares traduce him ? Which of you

Are safe, my honour'd fathers ? I would ask

(With leave of your grave fatherhoods) if their plot

Have any face or colour like to truth ?

Or, if unto the dullest nostril here,

It smell not rank and most abhorred slander ?

I crave your care of this good gentleman,

Whose life is much endanger'd by their fable ;

And as for them, I will conclude with this,

That vicious persons, when they're hot and flesh'd

In impious acts, their constancy abounds :

Damn'd deeds are done with greatest confidence.

1 *Avoc.* Take 'em to custody, and sever them.

3 *Avoc.* 'Tis pity two such prodigies should live.

1 *Avoc.* Let the old gentleman be return'd with care :
I'm sorry our credulity wrong'd him.

' 4 *Avoc.* These are two creatures !

' 2 *Avoc.* I have an earthquake in me.

' 3 *Avoc.* Their shame (even in their cradles) fled
their faces.

' 4 *Avoc.* You've done a worthy service to the state, Sir,

' In their discovery.'

1 *Avoc.* You shall hear, e'er night,
What punishment the court decrees upon 'em.

[*Exeunt Avocatori, &c.*]

Vol. We thank your fatherhoods.
How like you it ?

Mos. Rare.

I'd ha' your tongue, Sir, tipp'd with gold for this ;
I'd ha' you be the heir to the whole city ;
The earth I'd have want men, ere you want living.
They're bound t' erect your statue in St. Mark's.
Signior Corvino, I would have you go
And shew yourself, that you have conquer'd.

Corv. Yes.

Mos. It is much better that you should profess
Yourself a cuckold thus, than that the other
Should have been prov'd.

Corv. Nay, I consider'd that :
Now it is her fault.

Mos. Then it had been yours.

Corv. True. I doubt this advocate still.

Mos. I faith, you need not. I dare ease you of that care.

Corv. I trust thee, Mosca.

[*Exit.*

Mos. As your own soul, Sir.

Corb. Mosca.

Mos. Now for your business, Sir.

Corb. How! Ha' you business?

Mos. None else, not I.

Corb. Be careful then.

Mos. Rest you with both your eyes, Sir.

Corb. Dispatch it.

Mos. Instantly.

Corb. And look that all

Whatever, be put in, jewels, plate, monies,
Household-stuff, bedding, curtains.

Mos. Curtain-rings, Sir.

Only the advocate's fee must be deducted.

Corb. I'll pay him now ; you'll be too prodigal.

Mos. Sir, I must tender it.

Corb. Two chequins is well.

Mos. No, six, Sir.

Corb. 'Tis too much.

Mos. He talk'd a great while ;
You must consider that, Sir.

Corb. Well, there's three——

Mos. I'll give it him.

Corb. Do so ; and there's for thee.

[*Exit.*

Mos. Bountiful bones ! What horrid strange offence

Did he commit 'gainst nature, in his youth,
Worthy this age?—You see, Sir, how I work
Unto your ends. Take you no notice.

Volt. No;

I'll leave you.

[*Exit.*]

Mos. All is yours, the devil and all,
Good advocate—Madam, I'll bring you home.

Lady. No, I'll go see your patron.

Mos. That you shall not:

I'll tell you why. My purpose is to urge
My patron to reform his will; and for
The zeal you have shewn to-day, whereas before
You were but third or fourth, you shall be now
Put in the first; which would appear as begg'd,
If you were present. Therefore——

Lady. You shall sway me.

[*Exeunt.*]

END of the FOURTH ACT.

A C T V.

S C E N E, Volpone's House.

Enter Volpone.

VOLPONE.

WELL, I am here, and all this brunt is past.
I ne'er was in dislike with my disguise,
Till this fled moment. 'Here 'twas good in private;
'But in your public, *cave* whilst I breathe.'
'Fore Heav'n, my left leg 'gan to have the cramp,
'And I apprehended straight some power had struck me
'With a dead palsy. Well; I must be merry,
'And shake it off.' A many of these fears
Would put me in some villainous disease,
Should they come thick upon me: I'll prevent 'em.
Give me a bowl of lusty wine, to fright
This humour from my heart--Hum, hum, hum! [*Drinks.*]
'Tis almost gone already. I shall conquer.
Any device now, of rare ingenious knavery,
'That would possess me with a violent laughter,'

Woul

Would make me up again. So, so, so, so. [*Drinks again.*
This heat is life; 'tis blood by this time—Mosca!

Enter Mosca, Nano, and Castrone.

Mos. How now, Sir? Does the day look clear again?
Are we recover'd, and wrought out of error,
Into our way to see our path before us?
Is our trade free once more?

Volp. Exquisite, Mosca!

Mos. Was it not carried learnedly?

Volp. And stoutly.

Good wits are greatest in extremities.

Mos. It were a folly beyond thought, to trust

Any grand act unto a cowardly spirit.

You are not taken with it enough, methinks.

Volp. Oh, more than if I had enjoy'd the wench!

The pleasure of all woman-kind's not like it.

Mos. 'Why, now you speak, Sir.' We must here be
Here we must rest; this is our master-piece; [*fix'd*;
We cannot think we go beyond this.

Volp. True;

Thou hast play'd thy prize, my precious Mosca.

Mos. Nay, Sir,

To gull the court——

Volp. And quite divert the torrent
Upon the innocent.

Mos. Yes, and to make
So rare a music out of discords——

Volp. Right.

That yet to me's the strangest! How th' hast borne it!
That these (being so divided 'mongst themselves)
Should not scent somewhat or in me or thee,
Or doubt their own side.

Mos. True; they will not see't.

Too much light blinds them, I think. 'Each of them
'Is so possess'd and stuff'd with his own hopes,
'That any thing unto the contrary,
'Never so true, or never so apparent,
'Never so palpable, they will resist it——

Volp. Like a temptation of the devil.

Mos. Right, Sir.

'Merchants may talk of trade, and your great signiors
'Of land that yields well; but if Italy

'Have

‘ Have any glebe more fruitful than these fellows,
 ‘ I am deceiv’d.’ Did not your advocate rare ?

Volp. Oh !—My most honour’d fathers, my grave fa-
 Under correction of your fatherhoods, [fathers,
 What face of truth is here ? ‘ If these strange deeds
 ‘ May pass, most honour’d fathers.’——I had much ado
 To forbear laughing.

Mos. It seem’d to me you sweat, Sir.

Volp. In troth, I did a little.

‘ *Mos.* But confess, Sir,

‘ Were you not daunted ?

‘ *Volp.* In good faith, I was

‘ A little in a mist, but not dejected.

‘ Never but still myself.’

Mos. I think it, Sir.

‘ Now (so truth help me) I must needs say this, Sir,

‘ And out of conscience for your advocate,

‘ He has taken pains, in faith, Sir, and deserv’d

‘ (In my poor judgment, I speak it under favour,

‘ Not to contrary you, Sir) very richly ——

‘ Well—to be cozen’d ——

‘ *Volp.* Troth, and I think so too,

‘ By that I heard him in the latter end.

‘ *Mos.* Oh, but before, Sir !, Had you heard him first

‘ Draw it to certain heads, then aggravate,

‘ Then use his vehement figures——I look’d still

‘ When he would shift a shirt. And doing this

‘ Out of pure love, no hope of gain.’ ——

Volp. ‘ ’Tis right.

‘ I cannot answer him, Mosca, as I would,

‘ Not yet ; but for thy sake, at thy intreaty,’

I will begin ev’n now to vex ’em all,

This very instant.

Mos. Good Sir——

Volp. Call the dwarf

And eunuch forth.

Mos. Castrone, Nano !

Nan. Here.

‘ *Volp.* Shall we have a jig now ?

‘ *Mos.* What you please, Sir.’

Volp. Go,

Straight give out about the streets, you two,

That

That I am dead. Do it with constancy,
 Sadly, do you hear?—Impute it to the grief
 Of this late slander. Go. [*Ex. Cast. and Nano.*]

Mos. What do you mean, Sir?

Volp. Oh!

I shall have instantly my vulture, crow,
 Raven, come flying hither, on the news,
 To peck for carrion; my she-wolf, and all,
 Greedy, and full of expectation.

Mos. And then to have it ravish'd from their mouths?

Volp. 'Tis true. 'I will ha' thee put on a gown,
 'And' take upon thee as thou wert mine heir;
 Shew them a will; 'open that chest,' and reach
 Forth one of those that has the blanks; I'll straight
 Put in thy name.

Mos. It will be rare, Sir.

Volp. Ay,
 When they ev'n gape, and find themselves deluded—

Mos. Yes.

Volp. And thou use them scurvily.
 Dispatch; 'get on thy gown.'

Mos. But what, Sir, if they ask
 After the body?

Volp. Say it was corrupted.

Mos. I'll say it smelt, Sir; and was fain t' have it
 Coffin'd up instantly, and sent away.

Volp. Any thing; what thou wilt. Hold, here's my will.
 Get thee 'a cap,' a count-book, pen and ink,
 Papers afore thee; sit as thou wert taking
 An inventory of parcels. I'll get up
 Behind the screen, and hearken;

'Sometime peep over, see how they do look,
 'With what degrees their blood doth leave their faces.
 'Oh, 'twill afford me a rare meal of laughter!'

Mos. Your advocate will turn stark dull upon it.

Volp. It will take off his oratory's edge.

Mos. But your *clarissimo*, old round-back, he
 Will crump you, like a hog-louse, with the touch.

Volp. And what Corvino?

Mos. Oh, Sir! look for him,
 To-morrow morning, with a rope and dagger,
 To visit all the streets; he must run mad.

My Lady too, that came into the court,
To bear false witness for your worship——

Volp. Yes,

‘ And kiss me ’fore the fathers, when my face

‘ Flow’d with oils——

‘ *Mos.* And sweat, Sir. Why, your gold

‘ Is such another med’cine, it dries up

‘ All those offensive savours; it transforms

‘ The most deformed, restores ’em lovely,

‘ As ’twere the strange poetical girdle; Jove

‘ Could not invent t’ himself a shroud more subtle,

‘ To pass Acrisius’ guards. It is the thing

‘ Makes all the world her grace, her youth, her beauty.’

Volp. I think she loves me.

Mos. Who? The lady, Sir?

She’s jealous of you.

Volp. Dost thou say so?

[*A knocking.*]

Mos. Hark!

There’s some already.

Volp. Look.

Mos. It is the vulture;

He has the quickest scent.

Volp. I’ll to my place;

Thou to thy posture.

Mos. I am set.

Volp. But, Mosca,

Play the artificer now; torture them rarely. [*He retires.*]

Enter Voltore.

Volt. How now, my Mosca?

Mos. Turkey carpets, nine—

Volt. Taking an inventory? That is well.

Mos. Two suits of bedding, tissue——

Volt. Where’s the will?

Let me read that the while.

Enter Corbaccio and Servants.

Corb. So, set me down,

And get you home,

[*Exeunt Serv.*]

Volt. Is he come now to trouble us?

Mos. Of cloth of gold two more——

Corb. Is it done, Mosca?

Mos. Of several velvets eight——

Volt. I like his care.

Corb.

Corb. Dost thou not hear?

Enter Corvino.

Corv. Ha! is the hour come, Mosca?

Volp. [*Peeping from behind the screen.*] Ay, now they

Corv. What does the advocate here? [*muster.*]

Or this Corbaccio?

Enter Lady Would-be.

Corb. What do these here?

Lady. Mosca,

Is his thread spun?

Mos. Eight chests of linen——

Volp. Oh,

My fine Dame Would-be too!

Corv. Mosca, the will,

That I may shew it these, and rid 'em hence.

Mos. Six chests of diaper, four of damask—There.

Corb. Is that the will?

Mos. Down beds and bolsters——

Volp. Rare!

Be busy still. Now they begin to flutter;

They never think of me. Look, see, see, see,

How their swift eyes run over the long deed

Unto the name, and to the legacies,

'What is bequeath'd them there.'

[*Aside.*]

Mos. Ten suits of hangings——

Volp. Ay, i' their garters, Mosca. Now their hopes

Are at the gasp.

[*Aside.*]

Volp. Mosca the heir!

Corb. What's that?

Volp. My advocate is dumb. Look to my merchant;

He has heard of some strange storm; a ship is lost;

He faints. My Lady will swoon. Old glazen eyes,

He hath not reach'd his despair yet.

[*Aside.*]

Corb. All these

Are out of hope; I'm sure the man.

Corv. But, Mosca——

Mos. Two cabinets——

Corv. Is this in earnest?

Mos. One

Of ebony——

Corv. Or do you but delude me?

Mos. The other mother of pearl. I am very busy.

Good

Good faith, it is a fortune thrown upon me —
Item, one salt of agat ——— Not my seeking.

Lady. Do you hear, Sir?

Mos. A perfum'd box — Pray you, forbear;
 You see I am troubled — Made of an onyx —

Lady. How! —

Mos. To-morrow or next day I shall be at leisure
 To talk with you all.

Corv. Is this my large hopes' issue?

Lady. Sir, I must have a fairer answer.

Mos. Madam,

Marry, you shall. Pray you, fairly quit my house,
 Nay, raise no tempest with your looks; but hark you,
 Remember what your Ladyship offer'd me
 To put you in an heir. Go to; think on't.
 And what you said e'en your best madams did
 For maintenance; and why not you? Enough,
 Go home, and use the poor Sir Pol, your knight, well,
 For fear I tell some riddles. Go, be melancholy.

[*Exit Lady*.

Volp. Oh, my fine devil!

[*Aside*.

Corv. Mosca, pray you, a word.

Mos. Lord! will not you take your dispatch hence yet?
 Methinks, of all, you should have been th' example.
 Why should you stay here? With what thought, what
 promise?

Hear you; do you not know, I know you an ass,
 And that you would most fain have been a wittol,
 If fortune would have let you? That you are
 A declar'd cuckold, 'on good terms? This pearl,
 ' You'll say, was yours; right. This diamond;
 ' I'll not deny't, but thank you. Much here else;
 ' It may be so. Why, think that these good works
 ' May help to hide your bad.' I'll not betray you;
 Although you be but extraordinary,
 And have it only in title it sufficeth.

Go home; be melancholy too, or mad. [*Exit Corvino*.

Volp. Rare Mosca! How his villainy becomes him!

[*Aside*.

Vol. Certain he doth delude all these for me.

Corb. Mosca the heir!

Volp. Oh, his four eyes have found it!

Corb. I am cozen'd, cheated, by a parasite slave.
Varlet, thou'lt gull'd me.

Mof. Yes, Sir. Stop your mouth,
 Or I shall draw the only tooth is left.
 Are not you he, that filthy, covetous wretch,
 With the three legs, that here, in hope of prey,
 Have any time these three years snuff'd about,
 With your most groveling nose, and would have hir'd
 Me to the pois'ning of my patron, Sir?
 Are not you he that have to-day in court
 Profess'd the disinheriting your son,
 Perjur'd yourself? Go home; and die, and rot.
 If you but croak a syllable, all comes out.

' Away, and call your porters.' Go, go, rot. [*Exit Corb.*
Volp. Excellent varlet! [*Aside.*

Vol. Now, my faithful *Mofca*,
 I find thy constancy——

Mof. Sir?

Vol. Sincere.

Mof. A table

Of porphyry—I mar'el you'll be thus troublesome.

Vol. Nay, leave off now; they are gone.

Mof. Why, who are you?

What, who did send for you? Oh, cry you mercy,
 Reverend Sir! Good faith; I'm griev'd for you,

' That any chance of mine should thus defeat
 ' Your (I must needs say) most deserving travails;'

But, I protest, Sir, this was cast upon me,
 And I could almost wish to be without it,
 But that the will o' the dead must be observ'd.

Marry, my joy is, that you need it not.

You have a gift, Sir, (thank your education)
 Will never let you want, while there are men
 And malice to breed causes. ' Would I had

' But half the like for all my fortune, Sir!

' If I have any suits, (as I do hope,

' Things being so easy and direct, I shall not)

' I will make bold with your obstreperous aid,

' (Conceive me) for your fee, Sir.' In mean time,

' You that have so much law, I know, ha' the conscience,

' Not to be covetous of what is mine.

' Good Sir,' I thank you for my place; 'twill help

To set up a young man. Good faith, you look
As you were costive ; best go home and cool, Sir.

[*Exit Voltore.*]

Volp. ‘ Bid him eat lettuce well.’ My witty mischief,
Let me embrace thee. ‘ Oh, that I could now
‘ Transform thee to a Venus!’—*Mosca*, go,
Straight take my habit of *clarissimo*,
And walk the streets ; be seen ; torment them more.
We must pursue, as well as plot. Who would
Have lost this feast ?

Mos. I doubt it will lose them.

Volp. Oh, my recovery shall recover all.
That I could but think on some disguise
To meet them in, and ask them questions !
How I would vex them still at ev’ry turn !

Mos. Sir, I can fit you.

Volp. Canst thou ?

Mos. Yes, I know—

One o’ the *commandatori* so like you—

He was here yesterday, and has left his habit ;
And here it is, Sir ; on with it, on with it.

[*Helps him on with the habit.*]

Volp. A rare disguise, and answering thy brain.
Am I then like him ?

Mos. Oh, Sir ! you are he.

No man can sever you.

Volp. Oh, I will be a sharp disease unto ’em !

Mos. Sir, you must look for curses.

Volp. Till they burst ;

The fox fares ever best when he is curs’d.

[*Exeunt.*]

‘ SCENE, Sir Politick Would-be’s House.

‘ *Enter Peregrine and three Merchants.*

‘ *Per.* Am I enough disguis’d ?

‘ 1 *Mer.* I warrant you.

‘ *Per.* All my ambition is to fright him only.

‘ 2 *Mer.* If you could ship him away, ’twere excellent.

‘ 3 *Mer.* To Zant, or to Aleppo.

‘ *Per.* Yes, and ha’ his

‘ Adventures put i’ the Book of Voyages,

‘ And his gull’d story register’d for truth.

‘ Well, gentlemen, when I am in a while,

‘ And

‘ And that you think us warm in our discourse,
 ‘ Know your approaches.

‘ 1 *Mer.* Trust it to our care. [*They withdraw.*]

Enter Woman.

‘ *Per.* Save you, fair lady. Is Sir Pol within?

‘ *Wom.* I do not know, Sir.

‘ *Per.* Pray you, say unto him,
 ‘ Here is a merchant, upon earnest business,
 ‘ Desires to speak with him.

‘ *Wom.* I will see, Sir. [*Exit.*]

‘ *Per.* Pray you,

‘ I see the family is all female here.

Re-enter Woman.

‘ *Wom.* He says, Sir, he has weighty affairs of state,
 ‘ That now require him whole; some other time
 ‘ You may possess him whole.

‘ *Per.* Pray you, say again,
 ‘ If those require him whole, these will exact him,
 ‘ Whereof I bring him tidings. [*Ex. Wom.*] What might
 ‘ His grave affair of state now? How to make [*be*
 ‘ Bolognian sausages here in Venice, sparing
 ‘ One o’ th’ ingredients.

Woman returns.

‘ *Wom.* Sir, he says, he knows,
 ‘ By your word, tidings, that you are no statesman;
 ‘ And therefore wills you stay.

‘ *Per.* Sweet, pray you return him;
 ‘ I have not read so many proclamations,
 ‘ And studied them for words, as he has done.
 ‘ But, here he deigns to come. [*Exit Woman.*]

Enter Politick.

‘ *Pol.* Sir, I must crave
 ‘ Your courteous pardon. There hath chanc’d to-day
 ‘ Unkind disaster ’twixt my Lady and me,
 ‘ And I was penning my apology,
 ‘ To give her satisfaction, as you came now.

‘ *Per.* Sir, I am griev’d I bring you worse disaster:
 ‘ The gentleman you met at the Port to-day,
 ‘ That told you he was newly arriv’d——

‘ *Pol.* Ay, was
 ‘ A fugitive punk.

‘ *Per.* No, Sir, a spy set on you;

VOLPONE.

- ‘ And he has made relation to the senate,
- ‘ That you profess’d to him to have a plot
- ‘ To sell the state of Venice to the Turk.
- ‘ *Pol.* Oh, me!
- ‘ *Per.* For which warrants are sign’d by this time
- ‘ To apprehend you, and to search your study
- ‘ For papers——
- ‘ *Pol.* Alas, Sir! I have none, but notes
- ‘ Drawn out of play-books ——
- ‘ *Per.* All the better, Sir.
- ‘ *Pol.* And some essays. What shall I do?
- ‘ *Per.* Sir, best
- ‘ Convey yourself into a sugar-chest;
- ‘ Or, if you would lie round, a frail were rare,
- ‘ And I could send you aboard.
- ‘ *Pol.* Sir, I but talk’d so
- ‘ For discourse sake merely. *[Knocking without.*
- ‘ *Per.* Hark! they are there.
- ‘ *Pol.* I am a wretch, a wretch!
- ‘ *Per.* What will you do, Sir?
- ‘ Ha’ you ne’er a currant-butt to leap into?
- ‘ They’ll put you to the rack; you must be sudden.
- ‘ *Pol.* Sir. I have an engine——
- ‘ *3 Mer.* *[Within.]* Sir Politick Would-be!
- ‘ *2 Mer.* *[Within.]* Where is he?
- ‘ *Pol.* That I have thought upon before time.
- ‘ *Per.* What is it?
- ‘ *Pol.* I shall ne’er endure the torture. *[Aside.*
- ‘ Marry, it is, Sir, of a tortoise-shell,
- ‘ Fitted for these extremities. Pray you, Sir, help me.
- ‘ Here I have a place, Sir, to put back my legs—
- ‘ Please you to lay it on, Sir, with this cap,
- ‘ And my black gloves. I’ll lie, Sir, like a tortoise,
- ‘ Till they are gone.
- ‘ *Per.* And call you this an engine?
- ‘ *Pol.* Mine own device—
- ‘ Good Sir, bid my wife’s women
- ‘ To burn my papers.
- ‘ *[Per. covers him, and the three Merchants rush in.*
- ‘ *1 Mer.* Where’s he hid?
- ‘ *3 Mer.* We must,
- ‘ And will sure find him.

‘ *Mer.*

- ' 2 Mer. Which is his study?
 ' 1 Mer. What
 ' Are you, Sir?
 ' Per. I am a merchant, that came here
 ' To look upon this tortoise.
 ' 3 Mer. How?
 ' 1 Mer. St. Mark!
 ' What beast is this?
 ' Per. It is a fish.
 ' 2 Mer. Come out here.
 ' Per. Nay, you may strike him, Sir, and tread upon
 ' He'll bear a cart. [him :
 ' 1 Mer. What, to run over him?
 ' Per. Yes; Sir.
 ' 3 Mer. Let's jump upon him.
 ' 2 Mer. Can he not go?
 ' Per. He creeps, Sir.
 ' 1 Mer. Let's see him creep.
 ' Per. No, good Sir, you will hurt him.
 ' 2 Mer. Heart! I'll see him creep, or prick his guts.
 ' 3 Mer. Come out here.
 ' Per. Pray you, Sir, creep a little. [Aside to Pol.
 ' 1 Mer. Forth.
 ' 2 Mer. Yet farther.
 ' Per. Good Sir, creep. [To Pol.
 ' 2 Mer. We'll see his legs.
 ' [They pull off the shell, and discover him.
 ' 3 Mer. God's-so, he has garters!
 ' 1 Mer. Ay, and gloves.
 ' 2 Mer. Is this
 ' Your fearful tortoise?
 ' Per. Now, Sir Pol, we are even:
 ' For your next project I shall be prepar'd.
 ' I am sorry for the funeral of your notes, Sir.
 ' 1 Mer. 'Twere a rare motion to be seen in Fleet-street.
 ' 2 Mer. Ay, i' the term.
 ' 1 Mer. Or Smithfield, in the fair.
 ' 3 Mer. Methinks, 'tis but a melancholy fight.
 ' Per. Farewel, most politic tortoise.
 ' [Exeunt Per. and Merchants.

Enter Woman.

Pol. Where's my Lady?

' Knows she of this?

' Wom. I know not, Sir.

' Pol. Enquire.

[Exit Woman.]

' Oh, I shall be the fable of all feasts!

' The freight of the gazette, ship-boy's tale!

' And, which is worst, even talk for ordinaries!

' Re-enter Woman.

' Wom. My Lady's come most melancholy home,

' And says, Sir, she will straight to sea, for physic.

' Pol. And I, to shun this place and clime for ever.

' Creeping with house on back, and think it well,

' To shrink my poor head in my politic shell. [Exeunt.]

SCENE, Volpone's House.

Enter Mosca in the habit of a Clarissimo, Androgyno, Castrone, and Nano.

Mos. My fox

Is out of his hole, and ere he shall re-enter,

I'll make him languish in his borrow'd case,

Except he come to composition with me.

Androgyno, Castrone, Nano——

All. Here.

Mos. Go, recreate yourselves abroad; go, sport.

[Exeunt And. Cast. and Nano.]

So, now I have the keys, and am possess'd.

Since he will needs be dead afore his time,

I'll bury him, or gain by him. I am his heir,

And so will keep me, till he share at least.

To cozen him of all, were but a cheat

Well plac'd. No man would construe it a sin.

Let his sport pay for't. This is call'd the fox-trap. *[Exit.]*

SCENE, the Street.

Enter Corbaccio, Corvino, and Volpone.

Corb. They say the court is set.

Corv. We must maintain

Our first tale good, for both our reputations.

Corb. Why, mine's no tale; my son would there have kill'd me.

Corv. That's true ; I had forgot ; mine is, I'm sure.
But for your will, Sir—

Corv. Ay, I'll come upon him
For that hereafter, now his patron's dead.

Volp. Signior Corvino ! and Corbaccio !—Sir,
Much joy unto you.

Corv. Of what ?

Volp. The sudden good
Dropp'd down upon you—

Corb. Where ?

Volp. And none knows how. [*Aside.*]
From old Volpone, Sir.

Corb. Out, errant knave !

' *Volp.* Let not your too much wealth, Sir, make you

' *Corb.* Away, thou varlet ! [*furious.*]

' *Volp.* Why, Sir ?

' *Corb.* Dost thou mock me ?

' *Volp.* You mock the world, Sir.

' Did you not change wills ?

' *Corb.* Out, varlet !

Volp. Oh ! belike you are the man,
Signior Corvino. Faith, you carry it well ;

' You grow not mad withal. I love your spirit.

' You are not over-leaven'd with your fortune.

' You should ha' some would swell now, like a wine-fat,

' With such an autumn.' Did he gi' you all, Sir ?

Corv. Avoid, you rascal.

Volp. Troth, your wife has shewn
Herself a very woman. But 'you are well ;'
You need not care ; you have a good estate
To bear it out, Sir, 'better, by this chance,'
Except Corbaccio have a share.

Corb. Hence, varlet !

Volp. 'You will not be a' known, Sir. Why, 'tis wise.

' Thus do all gamesters, at all games, dissemble ;

' No man will seem to win.'—Here comes my vulture,
Heaving his beak up i' the air, and snuffing. [*Aside.*]

[*Exeunt Corvino and Corbaccio.*]

Enter Voltore.

Volt. Out-stripp'd thus by a parasite, a slave,
Would run on errands, and make legs for crumbs !

' Well, what I'll do —'

Volp.

Volp. The court stays for your worship.
 I e'en rejoice, Sir, at your worship's happiness,
 ' And that it fell into so learned hands,
 ' That understand the fingering——'

Volt. What do you mean?

Volp. I mean to be a suitor to your worship,
 For the small tenement out of reparations,
 That at the end of your long row of houses
 By the Piscaria. It was, in Volpone's time,
 Your predecessor, ere he grew diseas'd,
 A handsome, pretty-custom'd brandy-shop,
 As any was in Venice; ' (none disprais'd)
 ' But fell with him; his body and that house
 ' Decay'd together.'

Volt. Come, Sir, leave your prating.

Volp. ' Why, if your worship give me but your hand
 ' That I may ha' the refusal, I have done.'
 'Tis a mere toy to you, Sir: candle-rents,
 As your learn'd worship knows——

Volt. What do I know?

[*it.*

Volp. Marry, no end of your wealth, Sir; God decrease

Volt. Mistaking knave! What, mock'st thou my mis-
 fortune?

Volp. Blessing on your heart, Sir; would 'twere more!
 ' Now to my first again, at the next corner. [*Aside.*]

[*Exit Voltore.*

Re-enter Corbaccio and Corvino.

[*Mosca crosses the stage.*

Corb. See, in our habit! see the impudent varlet!

Corv. That I could shoot mine eyes at him, like gun-

' *Volp.* But is this true, Sir, of the parasite? [*stones!*

' *Corb.* Again t' afflict us, monster!

' *Volp.* In good faith, Sir,

' I am heartily griev'd a beard of your grave length

' Should be so over-reach'd. I never brook'd

' That parasite's hair; methought his nose should cozen.

' There still was somewhat in his look did promise

' The bane of a *clarissimo*.

' *Corb.* Knave——

' *Volp.* Methinks,

' Yet you, that are so traded i' the world,

' A witty merchant, the fine bird, Corvino,

' That

‘ That have such mortal emblems on your name,
 ‘ Should not have sung your shame, and dropp’d your
 ‘ To let the fox laugh at your emptiness. [cheese,

‘ *Corv.* Sirrah, you think the privilege of the place,
 ‘ And your red saucy cap, that seems to me

‘ Nail’d to your jolt-head with those two chequins,

‘ Can warrant your abuses. Come you hither;

‘ You shall perceive I know your valour well—

‘ *Volp.* Since you durst publish what you are, Sir.

‘ *Corv.* Tarry,

‘ I’d speak with you.

‘ *Volp.* Sir, Sir, another time.

‘ *Corv.* Nay, now.

‘ *Volp.* Oh, God, Sir! I were a wise man,

‘ Would stand the fury of a distracted cuckold.

‘ *Corb.* What, come again! [Mosca walks by them.

‘ *Volp.* Upon ’em, Mosca; save me.’ [Aside.

Corb. The air’s infected where he breathes.

Corv. Let’s fly him. [Exit Corv. and Corb.

‘ *Volp.* Excellent basilisk! Turn upon the vulture.’

Enter Voltore.

Volt. Well, flesh-fly, it is summer with you now;
 Your winter will come on.

Mos. Good advocate,

Pr’ythee, not rail; nor threaten, out of place thus;
 Thou’lt make a solecism, as Madam says.

Get you a biggen more; your brain breaks loose.

Volt. Well, Sir.

Volp. Would you ha’ me beat the insolent slave?

Throw dirt upon his first good cloaths?

Volt. This same

Is doubtless some familiar.

Volp. ‘ I am mad, a mule,

‘ That never read Justinian, should get up,

‘ And ride an advocate. Had you no quirk

‘ To avoid gullage, Sir, by such a creature?’

I hope you do but jest; he has not don’t;

This is but confederacy, to blind the rest.

You are the heir.

Volt. A strange, officious,

Troublesome knave! Thou dost torment me.

Volp. ‘ I know

‘ It

' It cannot be, Sir, that you should be cozen'd ;
 ' Tis not within the wit of man to do it ;
 ' You are so wise, so prudent ; and 'tis fit
 ' That wealth and wisdom still should go together.'

Sir, in troth, the court stays for you.

Volt. Away, rascal.

[*Exit.*

Volp. The poor gull'd advocate !

Now I'll go see what passes at the court ;

Oh, 'twill afford me a rare meal of laughter !

[*Exit.*

SCENE, *The Court.*

Enter four Avocatori, Notario, Commandadore, Corbaccio, Corvino, Voltore, and Volpone.

1 Avoc. Are all the parties here ?

Not. All but the advocate.

2 Avoc. And here he comes.

1 Avoc. Then bring 'em forth to sentence.

Enter Bonario and Celia.

Volt. O, my most honour'd fathers, let your mercy,
 Once win upon your justice, to forgive——
 I am distracted——

Volp. What will he now ?

Volt. O,

I know not which to address myself to first,
 Whether your fatherhoods or these innocents——

Corv. Will he betray himself ?

Volt. Whom equally

I have abus'd out of most covetous ends.

Corv. The man is mad.

Corb. What's that ?

Corv. He is posselt.

[*prostrate*

Volt. For which, now struck in conscience, here I
 Myself at your offended feet, for pardon.

1, 2 Avoc. Arise.

Cel. O, Heaven, how just thou art !

Volp. I am caught

In my own noose.

' *Corv.* Be constant, Sir : nought now

' Can help, but impudence.'

1 Avoc. Speak forward.

Com. Silence.

Volt.

Volt. It is not passion in me, reverend fathers,
But only conscience, conscience, my good fires,
That makes me now tell truth. That parasite,
That knave hath been the instrument of all.

1 Avoc. Where is that knave? Fetch him.

Volp. I go.

[*Exit.*

Corv. Grave fathers,
This man's distracted; he confess it now:
For hoping to be old Volpone's heir,
Who now is dead—

3 Avoc. How!

2 Avoc. Is Volpone dead?

Corv. Dead since, grave fathers—

Bon. O, sure vengeance!

1 Avoc. Stay,

Then he was no deceiver.

Volt. O no, none:

The parasite, grave fathers.

Corv. He does speak

Out of meer envy, 'cause the servant's made
The thing he gap'd for: please your fatherhoods,
This is the truth, though I'll not justify
The other, but he may be some-deal faulty.

Volt. Ay, to your hopes, as well as mine, Corvino
But I'll use modesty. Pleaseth your wisdoms
To view these certain notes, and but confer them;
As I hope favour, they shall speak clear truth.

Corv. The devil has enter'd him!

Bon. Or 'bides in you.

4 Avoc. We have done ill, by a public officer
To send for him, if he be heir.

2 Avoc. For whom?

4 Avoc. Him that they call the parasite.

3 Avoc. 'Tis true,

He is a man of great estate, now left.

[*court*

4 Avoc. Go you, and learn his name, and say, the
Intreats his presence here, but to the clearing
Of some few doubts.

2 Avoc. This same's a labyrinth!

1 Avoc. Stand you unto your first report?

Corv. My state,

My life, my fame---

Bon.

- ' *Boz.* Where is't ?
 ' *Corv.* Are at the stake.
 ' 1 *Avoc.* Is yours so too ?
 ' *Corb.* The advocate's a knave,
 ' And has a forked tongue.
 ' 2 *Avoc.* Speak to the point.
 ' *Corb.* So is the parasite too.
 ' 1 *Avoc.* This is confusion.
 ' *Volt.* I do beseech your fatherhoods, read but those.
 ' *Corv.* And credit nothing the false spirit hath writ :
 ' It cannot be but he's possess'd, grave fathers.
 ' [Scene closes.

S C E N E, *The Street.*

' *Enter* Volpone, *meeting* Nano, Androgyno,
 ' *and* Castrone.

- ' *Volp.* To make a snare for my own neck ! And run
 ' My head into it, wilfully ! with laughter !
 ' When I had newly scap'd, was free and clear !
 ' Out of meer wantonness ! O, the dull devil
 ' Was in this brain of mine, when I devis'd it,
 ' And Mosca gave it second ; he must now
 ' Help to fear up this vein, or we bleed dead.
 ' How now ! who let you loose ? Whither go you now ?
 ' What to buy gingerbread, or to drown kitlings ?
 ' *Nan.* Sir, Master Mosca, call'd us out of doors,
 ' And bid us all go play, and took the keys.
 ' *And.* Yes.
 ' *Volp.* Did Master Mosca take the keys ? Why so !
 ' I am farther in. These are my fine conceits !
 ' I must be merry, with a mischief to me !
 ' What a vile wreth was I, that could not bear
 ' My fortune soberly ! I must ha' my crotchets,
 ' And my conundrums ! Well, go you, and seek him :
 ' His meaning may be truer than my fear.
 ' Bid him, he streight come to me to the court ;
 ' Thither will I, and if't be possible,
 ' Unscrew my advocate upon new hopes :
 ' When I provok'd him, then I lost myself.

‘ S C E N E, *The Court.*

‘ *Four Avocatori, Notario, Commandadore, Bonario, Celia,*
 ‘ *Corbaccio, Corvino and Voltore.*’

1 *Avoc.* These things can ne’er be reconcil’d. He here
 Professeth, that the gentleman was wrong’d,
 And that the gentlewoman was brought thither
 Forc’d by her husband, and there left.

Volt. Most true.

‘ *Cel.* How ready is Heaven to those that pray !’

1 *Avoc.* But that
 Volpone would have ravish’d her, he holds
 Utterly false, knowing his impotence.

Corv. Grave fathers, he is possess’d ; again, I say,
 Possess’d : ‘ nay, if there be possession,
 ‘ And obsession, he has both.’

3 *Avoc.* Here comes our officer.

Enter Volpone.

Volp. The parasite will straight be here, grave fathers.

3 *Avoc.* You might invent some other name, Sir var-

‘ 4 *Avoc.* Did not the notary meet him ? [let.

‘ *Volp.* Not that I know.’

3 *Avoc.* His coming will clear all.

2 *Avoc.* Yet it is my story.

Volt. May’t please your fatherhoods---

Volp. Sir, the parasite. [*Volp. whispers Volt.*

Will’d me to tell you, that his master lives :
 That you are still the man, your hopes the same ;
 And this was only a jest---

Volt. How !

Volp. Sir, to try

If you were firm, and how you stood affected.

Volt. Ar’t sure he lives ?

Volp. Do I live, Sir ?

Volt. O me !

I was too violent.

Volp. Sir, you may redeem it :

They said, you were possess’d ; fall down, and seem so :
 I’ll help to make it good. God bless the man !

[*Voltore falls.*

Stop your wind hard and swell. See, see, see, see !

I

He

He vomits crooked pins ! his eyes are set,
 Like a dead hare's, hung in a poulterer's shop !
 His mouth's running away ! Do you see, Signior ?
 Now 'tis in his belly.

Corv. Ay, the devil.

Volp. Now in his throat.

Corv. Ay, I perceive it plain.

[flies,

Volp. 'Twill out, 'twill out, stand clear. See where it
 In shape of a blue toad, with bat's wings !

Do you not see it, Sir ?

Corb. What ? I think I do.

Corv. 'Tis too manifest.

Volp. Look ! he comes to himself !

Volt. Where am I ?

Volp. Take good heart, the worst is past, Sir.
 You are dispossest'd.

1 *Avoc.* What accident is this ?

2 *Avoc.* Sudden and full of wonder !

1 *Avoc.* If he were

Possest'd, as it appears, all this is nothing.

Corv. He has been often subject to these fits.

1 *Avoc.* Shew him that writing. Do you know it, Sir ?

Volp. Deny it, Sir ; forswear it, know it not. [*Aside.*

Volt. Yes, I do know it well, it is my hand :

But all that it contains is false.

Bon. O, practice !

2 *Avoc.* What maze is this ?

1 *Avoc.* Is he not guilty then,

Whom you there name the parasite ?

Volt. Grave fathers,

No more than his good patron, old Volpone.

2 *Avoc.* Why he is dead.

Volt. O no, my honour'd fathers,

He lives---

1 *Avoc.* How ! lives ?

Volt. Lives.

2 *Avoc.* This is subtler yet !

1 *Avoc.* You said he was dead.

Volt. Never.

1 *Avoc.* You said so.

Corv. I heard so.

1 *Avoc.* Here comes the gentleman, make him way .

3 *Avoc.* A stool.'

Enter Mosca.

4 *Avoc.* A proper man ; and, were Volpone dead,
A fit match for my daughter.

3 *Avoc.* Give him way.

Volp. Mosca, I was almost lost ; the advocate
Had betray'd all ; but now it is recover'd ;
All's o' the hinge again. Say, I am living.

Mos. What busy knave is this ? Most reverend fathers,
I sooner had attended your grave pleasures,
But that my order for the funeral
Of my dear patron did require me---

Volt. Mosca !

Mos. Whom I intend to bury like a gentleman.

Volp. Ay, quick, and cozen me all

3 *Avoc.* Still stranger !
More intricate !

1 *Avoc.* And come about again !

4 *Avoc.* It is a match, my daughter is bestow'd.'

Mos. Will you gi' me half ?

Volp. First I'll be hang'd.

Mos. I know

Your voice is good, cry not so loud.

1 *Avoc.* Demand

The advocate. Sir, did not you affirm
Volpone was alive ?

Volt. Yes, and he is ;

This man told me so.

Volp. Thou shalt have half.

Mos. Whose drunkard is this same ? Say you ?
Speak some that know him :

I never saw his face. I cannot now
Afford it you so cheap.

Volp. No !

1 *Avoc.* What say you ?

Volt. The officer told me.

Volp. I did, grave fathers,
And will maintain he lives, with mine own life,
'And that this creature told me.'—I was born
With all good stars my enemies.

[*Aside.*

Mos. Most grave fathers,
If such an insolence as this must pass

Upon me, I am silent. 'Twas not this
For which you sent, I hope.

3 *Avoc.* Take him away.

Volp. Mosca!

2 *Avoc.* Let him be whipp'd.

Volp. Wilt thou betray me?

Cozen me?

2 *Avoc.* And taught to bear himself
Toward a person of his rank.

1 *Avoc.* Away.

Mos. I humbly thank your fatherhoods.

Volp. Soft, soft—Whipp'd!

And lose all that I have? If I confess,
It cannot be much more.

2 *Avoc.* Sir, are you married?

Volp. They'll be ally'd anon; I must be resolute:
The fox shall here uncase.

Mos. Patron!

Volp. Nay, now

[*He puts off his disguise.*]

My ruin shall not come alone; your match
I'll hinder sure; my substance shall not glew you,
Nor screw you into a family.

Mos. Why, patron!

Volp. I am Volpone, and this is my knave;
This, his own knave: this, Avarice's fool:
This a chimera of wittol, fool and knave:
And, reverend fathers, since we all can hope
Nought but a sentence, let's not now despair it.

'You hear me brief.'

Corv. May it please your fatherhoods—

Com. Silence!

1 *Avoc.* The knot is now undone by miracle.

2 *Avoc.* Nothing can be more clear.

3 *Avoc.* Or can more prove

These innocent.

1 *Avoc.* Give them their liberty.

Ben. Heaven could not long let such gross crimes be hid.

2 *Avoc.* If this be held the high-way to get riches,

'May I be poor.'

3 *Avoc.* This's not the gain but torment.

1 *Avoc.* These possess wealth, as sick-men possess fe-

'Which trulier may be said to possess them.'

[*vers.*]

2 *Avoc.*

2 *Avoc.* Disrobe that parasite.

Corv and Mos. Most honour'd fathers—

1 *Avoc.* Can you plead ought to stay the course of
If you can, speak. [justice?

Corb. and Volt. We beg favour.

Ccl. And mercy.

1 *Avoc.* You hurt your innocence suing for the guilty.
Stand forth ; and first the parasite. You appear
'T' have been the chiefest minister, if not plotter,
In all these lewd impostures : ' and now, lastly,
' Have with your impudence abus'd the court,
' And habit of a gentleman of Venice,
' Being a fellow of no birth or blood :'
For which our sentence is, first, thou be whipp'd ;
Then live perpetual prisoner in our galleys.

Volt. I thank you for him.

Mos. Bane to thy wolfish nature.

1 *Avoc.* Deliver him to the Saffi. 'Thou,' Volpone,
' By blood and rank a gentleman, canst not fall
' Under like censure ; but' our judgment on thee
Is, that thy substance all be straight confiscate
To the hospital of the Incurabili.

And since the most was gotten by imposture,
By feigning lame, gout, palsy, and such diseases,
Thou art to lie in prison, cramp'd with irons,
Till thou be'st sick and lame indeed. 'Remove him.'

Volp. These are my fine conceits !

I must be merry, with a mischief to me !

1 *Avoc.* Thou, Voltore, to take away the scandal
Thou hast given all worthy men of thy profession,
Art banish'd from their fellowship, and our state.
Corbaccio, bring him near. We here possess
Thy son of all thy state, and confine thee
To the monastery of San' Spirito ;
Where, since thou knew'st not how to live well here,
Thou shalt be learn'd to die well.

Corb. Ha ! what said he ?

Com. You shall know anon, Sir.

1 *Avoc.* Thou, Corvino, shalt
Be straight imbarck'd from thine own house, and row'd
Round about Venice, through the grand canal,
Wearing a cap, with fair long ass's ears,

Instead

Instead of horns ; and so to mount, a paper
Pinn'd on thy breast, to the Berlino.

Corv. Yes,

And have mine eyes beat out with stinking fish,
Bruis'd fruit, and rotten eggs. 'Tis well, I am glad
I shall not see my shame yet.

I Avoc. And to expiate

The wrongs done to thy wife, thou art to send her
Home to her father, with her dowry trebled :
And these are all your judgments.

All. Honour'd fathers.

I Avoc. Which may not be revok'd. Now you begin,
When crimes are done and past, and to be punish'd,
To think what your crimes are.

Volp. This is call'd mortifying a fox.

Let all that see these vices thus rewarded,
Take heart and love to study them.

Stern Justice still maintains her upright cause,
Nor let's one culprit 'scape her equal laws.

Guilt prospers for a while, gross mischiefs feed
Like beasts, till they be fat, and then they bleed.

' The seasoning of a play, is the applause,

' Now, though the fox be punish'd by the laws,

' He yet doth hope there is no suff'ring due,

' For any fact which he hath done 'gainst you :

' If there be, censure him ; here he doubtful stands !

' If not, fare jovially, and clap your hands.'

END of the FIFTH ACT.





Roberts del

Published for Belle Bridge Theatre Jan. 11, 1778.

Pollard sc.

M^{rs}. P. HOPKINS in the Character of AURA.
Yes Sir they will tell you what will happen to you
Exactly——good Evening.

BELL'S EDITION.

THE
COUNTRY LASSES;

OR, THE
CUSTOM OF THE MANOR.

A COMEDY,
As written by Mr. CHARLES JOHNSON.

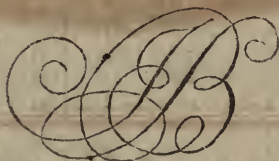
DISTINGUISHING ALSO THE
VARIATIONS OF THE THEATRE,

AS PERFORMED AT THE
Theatre-Royal in Covent-Garden.

Regulated from the Prompt-Book,
By PERMISSION of the MANAGERS,
By Mr. WILD, Prompter.

Nestra nec orubuit sylvas habitare Thalia.

VIRG.



L O N D O N :

Printed for JOHN BELL, near Exeter-Exchange, in the Strand.

MDCCLXXXVIII.

1871

1871

1871

1871

1871

1871

1871

1871

1871

1871

1871

1871

1871

1871

1871

1871

1871

1871

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE

EARL OF CLARE.

MY LORD,

I Humbly desire your protection for the following scenes, from the rage of a despairing faction, who are now become so tender as to take offence at metaphors, and are unable to endure the touch even of a poetical figure. The epilogue, designed to send our friends in good humour from the play, disoblighd some people extremely; and they attempted to damn the comedy for an innocent allegory, as if it were presumptuous to imagine there had been a separate peace: but every honest Briton was warmed in the cause of truth, and defended it with uncommon ardour.

Your Lordship has bravely entered the lists against the enemies of our constitution. You have, with the warmest heart, and the most steady courage, laboured in the cause of liberty, and are at length gloriously rewarded in the happiness of your country; all that your generous spirit proposd for the most unwearied diligence, at the expence of your health and fortune.

And now, my Lord, I humbly beg leave to congratulate your Lordship upon the success of your endeavours. Who is not filled with joy, when he sees those names again in Parliament who have constantly defended the liberties not only of Britain, but of all Europe, against the malice and ambition of some men, who prevailed upon the people to contend for slavery? But their attempts have proved ineffectual; and now, if they will not vouchsafe to be free, we thank Providence, they must serve abroad.

May your Lordship still continue to be, as you have begun, a shining ornament to your noble name and country ; and may all our young nobility be animated, by your great example, with the same honest public zeal for the common good ; so shall our thrice happy constitution be preserved on the present establishment to all posterity ; so shall Britain recover, and for ever hold the balance of the western world ; so shall it for ever be her glorious task to defend herself, and the nations around her, from tyranny and oppression. I am,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient,

And most humble servant,

CHARLES JOHNSON.



P R O L O G U E.

Spoken by a CHILD.

MAKE me to speak a prologue! Is he wild?
A prologue! Lord! are prologues for a child?
Such heathen words! so hard to bring 'em pat in!
The drama—Athens—God knows how much Latin!
Then if I should mistake a word, you know,
There's Mr. Wilks within would snub one so—
But I must do't.

Plays, like ambassadors, in form are shewn,
When first they've public audience of the town;
The prologue ceremoniously harangues,
And moves your pity for the author's pangs;
Acquaints you that he stands behind the scenes,
And trembles for the foudling of his brains.
Or with—Nay, if the poet peeps, I vow
He puts me clearly out—Or with a bow,
(I mean a curtsey) [Curtseying.] beg the ladies' pity;
Or else in thread-bare jests affront the city;
Or gravely tell you what you knew before,
How Ben and Shakespeare wrote in days of yore;
Then damn the critics first, that envious train,
Who, right or wrong, resolve to damn again.
Our author seeks, like bards of—of—Oh! Greece,
To make his play and prologue of a piece;
He leads you to the rural scenes, to prove
The country bargain still is love for love.
Oh, Covent-Garden! nursery of ills!
Fam'd for consumption both of wit—and pills:
Who would not quit thy walks, and vice in fashion,
The doubts and fears of mercenary passion,
For safe complying nymphs, unknowing sinners,
A feast of unbought love in cleanly pinner!
Hold——what comes next? [Looking on a paper.] I'll
never say't, in short——
We've bigger actresses are fitter for't——
Lord, how you laugh! as 'twere some naughty joke.
Sure there's no wickedness in what I spoke.
How should I say such things, who never knew
What kissing meant, before I play'd Miss Prue?

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

M E N.

Covent-Garden.

<i>Heartwell</i> , in love with <i>Flora</i> ,	Mr. Hull.
<i>Modely</i> ,	Mr. Dyer.
<i>Freehold</i> ,	Mr. Gibson.
<i>Sir John English</i> ,	Mr. Shuter.
<i>Lurcher</i> , nephew to <i>Sir John</i> ,	Mr. Davis.
<i>Sneak</i> , a taylor,	Mr. Holton.
<i>Longbottom</i> ,	Mr. Perry.
<i>Carbuncle</i> , a vintner,	Mr. Morris.
<i>Tim. Shacklesfigure</i> ,	Mr. Hamilton.
<i>Doublejugg</i> ,	Mr. Dunstall.
<i>Vultur</i> ,	Mr. Cushing.

W O M E N.

<i>Flora</i> ,	Mrs. Lessingham.
<i>Aura</i> ,	Miss Macklin.

Countrymen and Maids, &c.

SCENE, A Country Village, about forty Miles
from London.

THE COUNTRY LASSES.

* * *The lines distinguished by inverted comas, 'thus,' are omitted in the Representation, and those printed in Italics are the additions of the Theatre.*

ACT I.

SCENE, *an open country in perspective, with a gentleman's seat on a hill, at the foot of which is seen a farm-house.*

Enter Modely and Heartwell, in riding habits; a Footman appearing, &c.

HEARTWELL.

L EAD our horses round to the farm-house which stands yonder at the foot of the hill.

Mode. We'll walk cross the fields, and meet you there.

Heart. You heard the country fellows say we were seven miles from any town; you know our horses are so lame, it will be impossible to travel on; you see the sun is sinking from the top of yonder hill. Be content, George; to-night thou shalt have thy beloved mistress, Variety, and lie in a barn, in a warm barn, upon a truss of clean straw—

Mode. With a wholesome country girl, whose breath is sweeter than the bloom of violets, in a straw hat, a kersey gown, and a white dimity waistcoat; with natural red and white that innocently flushes over her face, and shews every motion of her heart.

Heart. Thus thy imaginations always cheat thee of thy joys. No, no; if we get credit for a barn, 'tis all I expect. This is a change of life, however.

Mode. True; we tread no more the same insipid circle;
our

8 THE COUNTRY LASSES.

our pains quicken our pleasures, and disappointments give spirit to our joys.

Heart. Ha! then a man should be sick to relish health.

Mode. Therefore I hate London, where their pleasures, like their Hyde-Park circle, move always in one round; where yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow, are eternally the same; to the chocolate-house, to dinner, the coffee-house, the play-house, a bottle, or a wench; 'tis the journey of a dog in a wheel, the music of a country fiddle, eternally vexing the strings to thrum the same weary notes.

Heart. Pr'ythee, no more; thy raillery, too, is the same dull dish served over and over. Thou hast no appetite, and railest at a feast.

Mode. Wherefore has nature opened this wild irregular scene of various pleasures; why given us appetites, passions, limbs, but to possess, desire, enjoy her beautiful creation? I'll travel over, and taste every blessing; nor wait till the tired sense palls with possession, but fly from joy to joy, unfated, fresh for new delights.

Heart. Do so, make yourself as good an entertainment as you can possibly form in imagination; while I walk forward, and endeavour to get a real supper and a bed.

[*Going.*

Mode. Nay, I'll go with you. You know I am no Platonic; in love or mutton, I always fall to without ceremony.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE opens, and discovers Flora, Aura, and some country Maids and Men dancing, with a fiddle before them, singing, the burden of the ballad: The lads and the lasses a sheep-sheering go.

Aura. In short, my feet are out o' measure; I am tired with the mirth of the day, and my weary limbs hobble after the crowd, like a tired pack-horse to the lamentable music of his own heavy bells.

Flora. You have won the garland of the green; the sheep-sheerers have given you the honours of their feast; you must pay the fees, and dance out of their debt.

Aura. Strike up then, thou torturer of cat-guts, clap thy ear and thy hands to the fiddle, and awake the drowsy strings.

Flora.

THE COUNTRY LASSES.

9

Flora. *First we'll have the sheep-sheering song.*

The SHEEP-SHEERING, a Ballad.

I.

When the rose is in bud, and blue violets blow,
When the birds sing us love-songs on every bough,
When cowslips, and daisies, and daffodils spread,
And adorn and perfume the green flowery mead ;
 When without the plough
 Fat oxen low,
The lads and the lasses a sheep-sheering go.

II.

The cleanly milk-pail
Is fill'd with brown ale ;
 Our table's the grass ;
Where we kiss and we sing,
And we dance in a ring,
And every lad has his lass.

III.

The shepherd sheers his jolly fleece,
How much richer than that which they say was in Greece !
 'Tis our cloth and our food,
 And our politic blood ;
 'Tis the seat which our nobles all sit on :
 'Tis a mine above ground,
 Where our treasure is found ;
 'Tis the gold and the silver of Britain.

Aura. Now, Clodden, once more thy hand, if thou
darest venture t'other trip.

' *Clod.* Ay, with all my heart, fair maiden ; I'll stand
' by you, to be sure, as long as 'tone foot will stand by
' t'other.

' *Aura.* Away, then.

[*A dance.*

' 1 *Count.* Odsnigs, she dances featly ! Ha, Mall,
' didst thou ever see the peer o' en ?

' 2 *Count.* Pray ye, now, who be thick maidens, who
' have been so merry at our feast to-day ?

' 1 *Count.*

10 THE COUNTRY LASSES.

' *Count.* Nay, nay, I know 'em not. Neighbour Clodden brought 'em; they been his guests, to be sure.

' *Clod.* Now, look ye, d'ye see, to be sure we will have the Sheep-sheering once again, and then it will be time to go home. The sun is going to bed already. Come, neighbour, dust it away.'

[*Dance, and exeunt omnes, except Aura and Flora.*

Aura. Cousin, I'll go to London.

Flora. What new lure has Satan employed to tempt you thither?

Aura. Only to see some of my own species, a few men and women; for I cannot look on the things we talk'd to just now, but as beings between men and beasts, and of an inferior nature to the people who grow in cities. If I stay longer among these savages, I shall not have vanity enough to keep myself clean. I must go to London to recover my pride; 'tis starving here.

Flora. And yet, how often have I heard thee rail at London, and call it an infectious congregation of vapours, an assemblage of falsehood and hypocrisy?

Aura. 'Tis true; but my affections have taken another turn. The heart of a woman, girl, like a bowl down a hill, continually changes as it rolls; 'tis a glass that receives every image, but retains none; the next new idea wholly effaces the former.' I declare seriously, I never knew my own mind two hours together in my life.

' *Flora.* 'Tis a blank sheet, and yet will receive no impression. How often have I endeavoured to engrave there an aversion to that abominable town, where credit is the pawn of knaves, and fattens upon the avarice of fools. Religion has been made the politician's bubble, and honour's public merchandise; and what ought to be the distinction of virtue, has been there made the price of sin. The tyrant, money, governs all: there every thing is venal; faith, fame, friendship, reason, and religion; nay, love, my dear, love, is bought and sold there too.

' *Aura.* O' my word, you declaim, child, like a country schoolmaster. Yet, after all, people bred in society, who can talk, and look, and lie, and bow a little, are as much superior to these clowns, as angels are to them.

' *Flora.*

‘ *Flora*. Have you courage enough to go barefaced into a crowd, where every body wears a mask ?

‘ *Aura*. No, I’ll be in the mode, and wear one too.

‘ *Flora*. What, at the price of truth ? With us now every thing is unadorn’d by art, and looks so beautiful in the dress of nature, so innocent, simple, and undisguised—

‘ *Aura*. Ay ; but there is a sort of wearisome dulness that waits upon our simplicity. Now here we must travel seven miles, seven long miles at least, to a beggarly country village, which you pompously stile our market town, where we may by chance see two things that look like intelligent beings, the parson and the attorney, or it may be some younger brother of some neighbouring Lord of the manor, whose face carries the colour of the October, and his shape of the hog’s head he feeds on, who drinks so constantly and so much, as if all the religion he had been ever taught was, that man was created to swallow a prodigious quantity of stale beer.’

Flora. Cousin, thou art a very wild fop.

Aura. We are all so in our hearts. What girl, whose whole composition is not dough and phlegm, would quit the management of her fan for a shepherdess’s crook, or gather daisies in the meads, and make garlands for lambs, when she may pick up hearts in the ring, and make conquests of men, or be content to behold the muddy reflection of her own face in a pond, when she may glide thro’ a crowd of living mirrors in the drawing-room, and be flattered by the whole *beau monde*—But, o’ my conscience, here they are !

Flora. What ?

Aura. Men, my dear, men—human creatures ; look yonder, they move towards us ; my heart beats quick at the uncommon sight ; does not thine too ? Be honest, and tell truth.

Flora. Remember your character, compose yourself, put your manners in your pocket, and be a clown for a moment.

‘ *Aura*. My hands are set, my eyes are fix’d, I have a blush at command, I’ll bite the fingers of my cot-
ton

‘ton gloves, and be as very a She-Cudden as ever hoped round a may-pole.

Enter Modely and Heartwell as Flora and Aura are going off.

Mode. Pretty maidens, stay one moment; turn again and give your assistance to two honest fellows in distress—our horses are lame, ’tis late, we have lost our way—

Heart. And we wou’d know where—(She is intolerably handsome!)

[*Aside of Flora.*

Mode. We shall lie to night?—(She is a sweet girl.)

[*Aside of Aura.*

Flora. Sir, we buy, we don’t sell fortune; two gypsies just now, offered us a penny-worth, they passed by those elms, I believe you may o’ertake ’em.

Aura. Yes, Sir, they will tell you what will happen to you exactly—good evening.

[*Going.*

Mode. Nay, if I part with you thus.

‘*Heart.* I am surpriz’d—such a dialect. So much beauty here, too, in a wild country hamlet---’tis wonderful,

‘*Mode.* They have the perfect mien of fine ladies at St. James’s in their air.

‘*Heart.* Ay, and their habits too are genteel tho’ rural. Don’t let ’em go yet, Modely.

Mode. ‘No, no---you must not stir.’

[*Holding her.*

Aura. Pray, Sir, as you are a gentleman---

Mode. Why, you wou’d not leave us in a strange place, ehild?

Aura. We have no title at all to you; if you are a couple of stray cattle, all we can do, is to bring you to the constable.

Mode. And what then?

Aura. Why then he must cry you three market-days, and if no body owns you, you fall to the lord o’ the manor.

Heart. [*To Flora, to whom he has been talking.*] Stay one moment, dear creature, vanish not immediately, if you wou’d not have me believe myself in a vision, and go raving up and down, talking of angels in country habits.

Flora. You have been talking all this while out o’ my compass: pray, Sir, come down to my understanding; mine,

mine, you see, is as plain as my dress—' 'Tis downright popery, to say your prayers in an unknown tongue.

' *Heart.* I'll turn catholic, any thing, say you'll be my saint.

' *Flora.* But can I grant your prayer, if I don't understand your petition?

' *Heart.* Your understanding is equal to your form, for to say which excels is impossible, where both are perfect.

' *Flora.* If I have any understanding, don't batter it with hard words. I know no woman who is proof against flattery; that Will-with-a-whisp leads us all astray; but I'll shut my ears and take myself away from it instantly.

' *Heart.* 'Tis impossible to see thee and not talk in rapture.—Thou beautiful robber, won't you gagg me, too?

' *Flora.* It grows late: pray give me my hand: let me go.'

Heart. In one word then; who is the inhabitant of that farm-house in the bottom?

Aura. A four old man, Sir, who, when he is in a very good humour, vouchsafes to call me daughter.

Flora. And me cousin: there we live, gentlemen, and are like to live, fretting one another like silk and worsted wove together, 'till we quite wear out.

Heart. You have none of the rust of the country upon you—'tis wonderful; you live polish'd among savages. Neither your words, your mien, your manners, nor any thing but your habits, speak you what you wou'd appear.

Aura. My father and the vicar of our parish taught us both to read and write; but indeed, Sir, my father was born a gentleman, and is by accident only a clown, for having in his youth profusely squander'd a great estate in London among common friends and mistresses, he took an aversion to the town, and turn'd his sword into a ploughshare.

' *Flora.* 'Tis so, gentlemen: in him you may see a thoughtless rake; degenerated into a plodding farmer—only a few books scatter'd carelessly about, keep alive the memory of the gentleman; and when a recess from his daily labour gives him leave, he will read a page or two in a Latin satirist, and as he smokes his pipe in

14 THE COUNTRY LASSES.

‘ our broad chimney-corner, explains to us all the ill-natur’d things they say of cities, courts, and polite pleasures as we call ’em; he declares he chose this solitude to soften himself, and file off that barbarity he had contracted by conversing with mankind.’

Heart. Is it impossible to see this four Cynic!—I persuade myself we might revive those seeds of humanity that once liv’d within him, and get entertainment in his farm for one night only: especially if you wou’d be so good to use your power too, and venture to intercede for a stranger.

Flora. Sir, ’tis impossible! if you wore any form but what you do.

Heart. Ask him only; try a little; use the influence of your eyes——Ask him with a look of pity, and ’tis impossible he should deny you.

‘ *Flora.* Ay; but I myself am rightly not satisfied; I fear——

‘ *Heart.* Away with fear, ’tis an enemy to all that is brave or generous. Can we offend against all the laws of humanity, honour, hospitality? I swear there’s an awful charm in your eyes, wou’d stop the burning rage of a drunken libertine.

Flora. ‘ Ah! no more o’ that, I beg you. Shall we ask!’ [To *Aura*.

Aura. Will you venture?

Flora. I am half afraid! if you wou’d second me.

Aura. Never fear, my girl: I’ll stand bravely by thee—Gentlemen, we’ll endeavour to prevail, and you shall have an answer in the turn of a second.

[*Exeunt Flora and Aura.*

Heart. What a couple of jewels are here in rustic work!

• *Mode.* I never beheld any thing so charming!

Heart. What a shape, a neck, a chest!

Mode. An air, a mien, an instep, a foot!

Heart. Why, you don’t mean my girl?

Mode. Nor you mine, I hope?

Heart. Mine is the most beautiful piece of flesh and blood——

• *Mode.* Mine the sweetest, most angelical little rogue—

Heart. Her hair is dark brown, her eyes are two black globes of living light—Diamonds of the first water——

Mode.

Mode. Her breath is sweeter than the new-made hay-cock. I had rather look upon her than enjoy a toast—

Heart. I never saw any thing in a brocade so genteel.

Mode. I am stark mad for a dimity petticoat.

Heart. Ten thousand---

Mode. Pray give me leave, Sir ; her---

Heart. I tell you, Sir ; ten thousand thousand Cupids play in every ringlet of her hair, millions of little loves wanton in her eyes, myriads of graces sip nectar from her lips ; infinite, nameless, bewitching beauties revel in every feature of her transporting face, 'tis extreme pleasure to see her, 'tis rapture to hear, when she smiles I am in an extacy, and all beyond, George all beyond are unutterable joys.

Mode. Unspeakable pleasures.'

Heart. Ah, rogue, rogue ! what a lucky night is this !

Mode. If we get in. [Embracing one another.

Heart. If we have entrance---Hold, here they come, and old Crabtree with 'em.

Enter Freehold, Flora, and Aura.

Free. Oh, hoh---perhaps these are some of my Covent-Garden acquaintance.

Flora. I can't tell ; but they have waited a great while for an answer.

Free. Let 'em wait, with a murrain.

Aura. Please, Sir, to say aye or no.

Free. No, then, no---Burn my house and barns, send the murrain among my cattle, the mildew in my corn, and the blight in my fruit---but let no London plagues come within my doors---What has bewitch'd you to ask such a question ?

Flora. They desire in common humanity, as they are gentlemen.---

Free. Gentlemen---Hah ! why they are the bane of your sex. The devil did less mischief in the form of the serpent to Eve, than in that to her daughters---A woman's reputation is always lost when 'tis ventur'd---but these are profess'd sharpers, who never play upon the square for beauty, and are worse enemies to it than old age or the small-pox.

Aura. We are guarded, Sir, by you---by your instructions.

16 THE COUNTRY LASSES.

Free. Hah ! true daughter of the first woman. Well ! I'll talk with 'em, to oblige you. Where are they ?

Flora. There they are, Sir : they look like sober, civil, honest gentlemen, and not as if they came from London.

Free. Now I think they look like a deputation from the cuckold-makers of the corporation.

Mode. Sir, the unexpected occasion of this trouble—

[To Freehold.

Free. Oons, Sir, speak truth ; I know what you are pumping for, a pretty excuse for an unseasonable visit ; I have not told one lie in compliment these thirty years.

Heart. Nor heard one neither ?

Free. No, Sir, nor heard one ; here we only make up a few necessary lies for a market-day, or so.

Mode. But we wou'd only say, in plain words——

Free. I'll tell you what honourable design you two have clubb'd for in plain words ; your horses were to fall lame, you were to be benighted, and making use of my humanity for entrance into my house, you very honestly hope for an opportunity to ruin my family. Ask your conscience, is it not so ? hah !

Heart. We confess the charge is too generally true ; but we beg leave to be excepted, and declare such practices, whatever habits men wear, call 'em villains—However, if 'tis impossible to gain credit with you—

Free. Whence came you ?

Heart. From London.

Free. From London, so I thought again, the mart of iniquity, Satan's chief residence ; he picks up a vagabond soul or two now and then with us, but he monopolizes there.

Heart. What drove you first from London ?

Free. Millions of impertinents. I could not bear to dance attendance in the antichambers, and catch cold on the stair-cases of false tricking courtiers ; nor endure to be bespattered by the chariot of an upstart, a mushroom, who finds himself, he does not know how, by a figure in a lottery, a turn of a die, or the folly of a woman, metamorphosed into a gentleman, and lolling in the chariot that his father drove. I could not pay my court to a quality-idiot of the last edition, I had not patience to attend the burlesque rhodomantades of a liar in red, nor the nauseous flattery of an atheist in black.

Heart.

Heart. Ah, Sir, London is changed since your pious days ; then indeed, there was too great an indulgence given to libertines.

Free. Ay, 'tis changed, truly ; I hear what your modern London is ; we were lewd, indeed, in our days, but then, even lewdness had propriety ; but of late they say your fools set up for rakes, and rakes for politicians ; nay, even now you may see there sharpers in brushed beavers and bobs, and cullies in long wigs and swords ; and instead of changing honest staple for gold and silver, you deal in bears and bulls only ; you have women who are chaste, and would yet appear lewd ; and you have saints that are sinners ; in short, 'tis a very wicked town, your parsons stock-job, and your wenches pray.

Mode. But what is all this to the world of love and wit and gallantry, old Diogenes ?

Free. Your very beaus, they say, now give way to your wittlings ; and you may hear your fops in under-
standing rail at those in dress. Who can with patience bear a coxcomb that supports the credit of his parts by retailing of wit, who makes a feast in the city, with the good things, as he calls 'em, the scraps that he steals from court, and insults his intimates with a stolen understanding, who really believes himself a useful creature for keeping up the circulation of wit.

Heart. Those gentlemen have breviates for wits ; and while they attend a vacancy serve as cadets.

Mode. But, Sir, to our purpose ; is there no security to be taken for one-night only ?

Free. There is ; but 'tis in my own hands, if you'll accept the terms ; look ye, gentlemen, I have one faithful friend in the world, 'tis honest Towser, a true-bred mastiff, one who never scrapes nor kisses my hand, but in honest truth ; who will stand by me with his best blood. Now he does me the favour to lie every night at my bed's foot ; I am likewise master of a brace of large-boned threshers ; and these three have been the guardians of my farm these ten years ; they have no more respect than I for a laced coat : you know the rest ; if I hear the conies squeak, I'll send the hunt abroad ; I'll ha' no poaching, no tunneling, no driving in the dark.

18 THE COUNTRY LASSES.

Heart. Sir, we accept your terms, he that intends no wrong, fears none.

Free. There then, enter. There lies your way.

[*Exeunt Freehold, Modely and Heartwell, into the Farm.*]

Flora. Laud, cousin, he has taken 'em both in.

Aura. I tremble so, I don't know what to do.

Flora. It was your fault.

Aura. You were bewitched to ask him.

Flora. Why did not you advise me to the contrary?

Aura. O dear, my heart beats.

Flora. Ay, it beats to arms, child, the garrison is besieged.

Aura. Come, let's in; courage.

Flora. These are your doings, you wild little colt.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE, *the Inside of the Farm.*

Enter Freehold, Modely, and Heartwell.

Free. Forget you have been within the walls of a city, and we shall agree well enough.

Heart. But, Sir, do you never, never intend to see London again?

Free. Never, never, I tell you.

Heart. Why so, Sir?

Free. I gave you my reasons: but I'll repeat 'em to please you.' I am unqualified for conversation there. I have not slavish complaisance enough to work up every muscle to a forced smile, and court the no-jests of a wealthy fool, in hopes to see my name in the codicil of his will. I cannot be ravished with the young graces of a superannuated beauty, who forgets she has not one tooth in her head, for which she is not in debt; in short, there is not a creature among you wears his natural shape; your cullies would be thought sharpers, and your sharpers cullies; your noisy roaring boys are cowards, and your brave men silent; ugliness is exactly dressed, and beauty in dishabille. The few virtues you have, you hide, and affect crimes to be agreeable. In a word, you are all false, double-fac'd, execrable hypocrites. Come, will you drink a cup of brown ale before you eat?

Heart. I thank you, Sir, but I am not thirsty now.

Free. Oons, do you never drink but when you are dry?

We have none o' your lemonade or sherbet here, man ; no, nor your t'other washy thin potation, called French wine, that brewer of false love and politics : we live upon English beef and beer, the staple of our own country.

Heart. And every honest Briton ought to encourage it.

Free. Right, boy : come, will you smoke a pipe before supper : a pipe is the best whet in the world,

Mode. No, by no means.

Free. Oh, hoh, it will spoil your kissing.

Mode. Pray, Sir, who is the lord of your manor here ?

Free. We have no lord, Sir, we have a lady.

Mode. A lady ?

Free. Ay, Sir, she lives at the great house on the hill, above, with an old knight her kinsman, whose estate joins to hers ; one Sir John English, a gentleman of right old-fashioned hospitality : he has only one fault, he is a little too fond of your quality : he was at court in his youth, where he had a superficial view of the glare and gaiety of the place ; and now he doats upon every thing that comes from thence ; he is particularly civil to a page ; he has a wonderful veneration for a squire o' the body ; a knight gives him great joy ; and he is ravished with a lord.

Mode. A very odd humour : but as to the lady of your manor ?

Free. Ay, there's a lady, a miracle ! she has youth and beauty, and two thousand pounds a year, and yet has the use of all her limbs ; she will walk you four miles before the sun is up, and come home with natural colours on her face, got by wholesome exercise. She uses no face physic ; she is none o' your town daubers, that are in danger of losing their complexions for a kiss ; no, she looks like the blooming rose, and is as sweet as the breath of the morning.

Mode. Was she never married, Sir ?

Free. No, the old colonel, her father, Sir Frederick Beauville (a worthy man he was) left her and her estate free ; and she says she will keep 'em both so : she hates London, your men and your manners.

Mode. And so she is settled, as the timber upon her estate, for life, with her old kinsman !

Free. Yes, there they live together ; and let me tell you, the old hospitable genius of England seems revived
in

in them ; they are of almost as much benefit to their neighbours as the sun and rain, a general good. Well ! but come into this room and drink a cup of ale ; nay, I will have it so.

Mode. We'll follow you.

Erce. What, you see the wenches coming ; remember our articles, or Towser's the word. *[Exit.]*

Enter Flora and Aura.

Mode. Hah, my Mademoiselle once again ! I'll kill thee my dear little thief, with kisses.

Aura. Then I shall be the first maid that ever died that death, and deserve to be buried with my face downwards ; though I have known many a big fellow brag of his victories, who durst never draw his sword.

Mode. But I have fought many a duel.

Aura. And did you always conquer ?

Mode. No, sometimes it has been a drawn battle : but now I'll be victorious or die. *[Kisses and hugs her.]*

Aura. Laud, lud, you do so touzle and rumple one's clothes : you men are the strangest creatures.

Mode. You women have the most whimsical fancies ! Whither do you run ? What, must I follow you ?

Aura. If you have courage, the old dragon is in the next room.

Mode. Pox o' the dragon ; I am a knight-errant, and 'tis my business to conquer dragons.

Aura. Come on, then, Hercules the second.

[Exeunt Modely and Aura.]

Heart. Hear me ; let me swear to you, fair maid.

Flora. What is it you would swear ; that you love me ?

Heart. More than life, joy, health, or liberty ; ' my whole soul darts through my eyes in transport to behold you, every atom is in arms, my blood gallops through my veins ; ' I am all air while I talk to you.

Flora. I am afraid your zeal is not of the right sort, but like the agitation of those false prophets, who fancy themselves inspired from above, when they are only actuated below ; this is not warmth, but wind ; all bubble, vapour.

Heart. You should forgive a small delirium to a wretch in a fever.

Flora.

' *Flora*. I can forgive a madman, but I won't regard him.

' *Heart*. Would you not pity, and cure him if you could ?

' *Flora*. Then you would be cured of love.

' *Heart*. By possession of what I die for.

' *Flora*. True, possession cures love, as death does diseases.

' *Heart*. By those immortal eyes, 'twill make mine live for ever.

' *Flora*. No, no, 'twill die suddenly. Love's an ague, and the cold fit certainly succeeds the hot.

' *Heart*. Do you believe no man is constant ?

' *Flora*. I don't know, if one were to mould you ; make you as one does one's clothes, or so.

' *Heart*. Make me, mould me as you please ; fancy the man you would have in idea.

' *Flora*. I believe indeed I shall never have a man any otherwise than in idea—But no more flourishes, I pray you, Sir ; we have conversed in figure ever since we saw one another : and you know, though one might like to smell to a rose nosegay now and then——

' *Heart*. One does not care to feed upon a rose.'

Flora. Come, then, let us clear up at once, and talk common sense to one another.

Heart. Agreed !

Flora. So be it !

Heart. Why then really I never liked a woman better in my life.

Flora. I think you are something more than tolerable ; I was going to say an agreeable fellow.

Heart. Do you like me ?

Flora. As I might a picture.

Heart. Do you take me only for the shadow of a man ?

Flora. To me no more, for I look on this accident only as the idle delusion of a morning's dream.

Heart. Then let me wake thee into real happiness, the little god of love shall wanton in thy heart, as he now plays and revels in thy eyes.

Flora. Hold ! hold ! you are running back into metaphor ; why this is downright poetry. Pray come to common sense again.

Heart.

22 THE COUNTRY LASSES.

Heart. That is very true ; to be short, then, whereabouts is your bed-chamber ?

Flora. Pho, now you talk idly.

Heart. Do you lie alone, child ? [Kissing her.]

Flora. Why are you so impertinent ?

Heart. Why are you so coy ?

Flora. What, then, it seems, you do certainly assure yourself, that, having kissed me, squeezed my hand, and fighed out a few unnecessary fine things, I shall fall plumb into your arms, as cats get birds by gazing at 'em ?

Heart. Come, my love, this dialect is as affected as 'tother ; take this jewel, accept it, wear it as a token of the most pure affection ; you shall live with me, command me and my fortune. I'll take you from this cottage, and this odd old man, and you shall live as your beauty and your wit demand you should, in all the various pleasures this gay world can give you. [Embracing her.]

Flora. Here, Sir, take your toy again ; I thank you humbly for the mighty favour ; I sell no beauty. What would you barter with me for myself ? Bribe me out of my person ? 'Tis poorly done ; but know, Sir, I have a heart within, that proudly tells me no price shall ever buy it : but is it honest in you to tempt that innocence you should protect ? Reason distinguishes men from beasts, and virtue, men from men : now, as you boast of birth and virtuous ancestors, and would wear those honours as your lawful merit ; think, reflect ; are your intentions agreeable to justice, honour, gratitude ? You wrong yourself as well as me ; farewell. [Exit.]

Heart. She has stung me to the soul with her too just reproaches ; I am conscious and ashamed of my crime ; her virtues, like her beauties, stood at first so silently within her, so unstirred by the least air of vanity, she looked as if she knew 'em not ; and yet, when the last injury provoked 'em, they flushed and swelled her heightened features with such pointed indignation—It is not to be borne—My heart burns within me—She sinks in to my mind.' I must have her, though at the price of liberty. I'll marry her ; but what will the world say—I'll renounce it ; I'll abjure it ;

I'll give her all my future life, and prove,
Like Anthony, the world well lost for love.

[Exit.]
ACT

A C T II.

*Enter Lurcher, Hawkwell, Vultur, Carbuncle a Vintner,
Longbottom a Peruke-maker, and Sneak a Taylor.*

LURCH.

AH, Vultur! love and the dice have undone me. I have pursu'd Angelica, and my bad fortune, to the last farthing. What must I do? dishonour waits upon necessity, and he that keeps his virtue when he is poor, is a hero indeed.—Yet I'll endeavour, struggle hard, and not part with the gentleman while 'tis possible to preserve him.

Vult. What do you mean to do with these hungry rascals, who follow you thus for their debts?

Lurch. To pay 'em.

Vult. When?

Lurch. To-morrow.

Vult. Which way?

Lurch. My uncle shall lend me the money.

Vult. Good!

Lurch. Ay, my uncle, Sir John English, who inhabits the great house with the turret o' top there. He shall lend me the money, then will I discharge these clamorous thieves and be saucy to them in my turn.

Vult. You rave; why your uncle has not seen you these ten years, nor can be prevail'd upon to trust you even with subsistence. What do you mean?

Lurch. Why, he shall lend me the money and not know he lends it me: I'll extort it from him by the violence of stratagem; I'll stare him full in the face, and make him believe I oblige him when I receive the money.—

Vult. Riddles! riddles!

Sneak. I pray you, Master Lurcher, indeed now, you know I have waited a long time, a most scandalous long time, for my money, and your bill lengthens and lengthens every day; upon my word, I shall not be able to hold out.—Besides, here you have draggled me a long way, and told me I should be paid by your uncle; and alas-a-day, 'tis an idle tale, a flim-flam, for you dare not so much as look towards the gates of his house---No, he won't see you, it seems; I wish I were at home again.—Here have you brought us into a cursed country, where we can neither get victuals, nor sleep.

Carb.

Carb. Pho,' pox, this is very silly; is this your land of Canaan that you talk'd of, that flowed with strong beer and chines of beef?

Lurch. Have patience, old fiery face, thy nose shall have comfort presently——

Carb. Patience! demme, Dick, which way now shall I come by my money?---You know I love you, you rearing young dog, you know I do;---but here, now, here's a hundred pounds due for clean claret besides money lent, hard neat money——Reckonings paid, coach hire, suppers at your lodging, and ladies tees.---How the devil do you imagine, now, Dick Lurcher, that I shall pay the merchant---Why, you will force me to break and turn gentleman---It will never do.

Long. Sir, I would in the most submissive manner imaginable——

Lurch. So, so, what! all upon the hunt at once---One word, gentlemen.

Long. You know very well the last tye-up I sold you was as light and bright as silver, and as strong as wire, with a fine flowing, large open curl; I reckon you but twelve pieces for it; and upon my soul, my lord Lanthorn Jowl would have paid me as much for it in ready gold.

Lurch. And why wou'd you not take his money?

Long. Because it did not suit his complexion.

Lurch. Why what was that to thee, puppy.

Long. Ah, Sir, his dark olive face would have thrown a shade upon the brightness of the hair; I should have lost all my credit. Now, Sir, if a gentleman does but wear one's work well, and become it---I must needs say that for your worship.

Lurch. Well, gentlemen, here you are, and I thank you for your attendance to my uncle's. I wish I had interest enough in my own person to desire you to walk in and refresh: but that is impossible.

Carb. Why, what do you think I'll lie in the fields, Dick? No, no, I'll have a dram, and a jug of his stingo too: what, I'll try the interest of my own face rather than fail.

Lurch. Thy face! nay, 'tis time, indeed: the lights in thy face, Carbuncle, begin to burn blue; and if thou dost not get some fuel for them, they will go out in ut-

'ter darknefs---look ye, gentlemen, my fellow travellers and friends,' if you will agree to a project I have, and be content to act your parts in it, I will engage you all a lodging, and the best entertainment in the house : nay, perhaps your money too.

Sneak. I pray you what is your project, Mr. Lurcher ? tho' I own I have no great opinion of projects, or projectors.

Carb. Demme, Dick, what is it ? I love projects and whims wonderfully.

Long. I always said, upon my soul I did always affirm, that he was a very fine gentleman ; tho' really I hope this project will produce a bed and a supper, ' for I am somewhat hungry.'

Lurch. Doubt it not, gentlemen : you and all the world know the character of Sir John English : he is excessively fond of quality, and piques himself upon being the most hospitable man in the county.

Carb. And what then ?

Lurch. Why then I have a mind to put the change upon him.

Carb. Change upon him ! how ?

Lurch. Why, I will be a man of quality ; I'll clap a blue ribbon cross my shoulders, ' and a patch upon my face ;' and if you will assist me so far, if you will condescend so low as to be thought part of my equipage, why we will come rattling to his gates, and be receiv'd with as much joy and ceremony as if we were really what we appear'd.

Carb. Egad, I approve it wonderfully---We'll revel in October and roast beef.

Long. Upon my soul, a very elegant design---You'll wear your best bag ?

Sneak. But how will this help us to our money, Mr. Lurcher ?

Carb. Why, his Lordship will take the knight to picquet after supper, and bite him.

Lurch. No, no, Sir John never plays ; I have a more honourable design than that, I assure you.

Carb. What is it ? Out with it, my little bully boy.

Lurch. Why, when all the family are fast asleep, we will clap on our masking suits and vizors---

26 THE COUNTRY LASSES.

Carb. And rob the house ; very good.

Sneak. Oh, laud ! rob the house ; why, what do you think I'd be hang'd for your projects !

Lurch. No, my hogshhead of iniquity, no ; we will bind them in their beds, and one another afterwards, and yet not rob the house of a shilling.

Carb. To what purpose should you bind them, then ?

Lurch. Don't enquire further beforehand---I beg you only to trust me with the conduct of this affair---I'll venture my life I shall bring you all off safe : I have in our coach, which stands by the road-side, every thing that can be necessary for the execution of our design.—Nay, nay, —don't let your courage sink, now we are upon action, lads——

Sneak. I desire to be excus'd ; I will not engage in it.

Carb. I'll slice you if you mutter, I'll demolish—What ! do you mutiny ? Go on, Dick, we'll follow you to the end of the world.

Lurch. Along, then, my lads of mettle ; be firm and united, and I will be answerable for the success. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE, *the Court-yard to Sir John English's House ; Sir John unbutton'd, without his Hat, and Timothy Shacklefigure his Steward.*

Sir John. Good now ! good now, Timothy ! have you enquir'd what is become of cousin Betty all this day—and her companion, her little gossiping tittle-tattle friend——Hah, Timothy !

Shackle. An' it shall please your worship's worship, after the most painful inquisition in pursuance of your worship's commands, I am not able to discover what your worship might——

Sir John. Pr'ythee don't worship me so much, but for form sake, Timothy, tell me whither they are gone.

Shackle. Really that I cannot say, but the two young ladies were seen to walk forth early this morning with our very wise neighbour, farmer Freehold.

Sir John. So ! but they left word they would return.

Shackle. I am not able particularly to affirm so much.

Sir John. Now the pox take thee, for a formal Anno Domini blockhead.

Tim.

Tim. Give me leave to assure your worship, that without form or order—

Sir John. Tell me where they are gone, or I'll break thy strange pate.

Tim. Really, if your worship bruises me unto death, I shall most willingly perish for the truth, nor will I discover more unto your worship than I know.

Sir John. Get out o' my sight, you confounded multiplication puppy; yet stay a little; this fellow ruffles me so every day with his most abominable *circumbendibus* phrases—Well, cousin Betty is a fine girl, she has two thousand pounds a year.—Ah, if my nephew Dick were not the most profligate rogue---But he may reform one time or other; she will never marry without my advice, that is certain.—Heark thee, thou numerical coxcomb: enquire if they expect the girls home at supper; I'll take a turn or two in the hall. [Exit.

Enter Lurcher and four of his creditors as the equipage of a Nobleman, and Vultur as his running footman.

Sneak. Laud, my heart sinks: I sweat and tremble already; I shall never hold out.

Carb. You pin-hearted puppy, recall your courage, or I'll demolish you. What, wou'd you ruin our whole affair?

Sneak. Well, dear Carbuncle, be peaceable, I will strive.

Lurch. Tom Vultur, how does his grace become me? does the man of quality sit easy on the rake?

Vult. Admirably, you look as if you were made for a blue ribbon.

Lurch. And you flatter me as if I wore one—To business, lads, to business—Do you, Tom Vultur, you who represent my running footman, trot before and prepare the old knight to receive us. If I can carry my design in this habit and equipage— [Exit Vult.

Carb. We'll drink, and wench, and roar eternally, our whole lives shall run round in a circle of mirth.

Lurch. Joy shall be the jack, pleasure the bias, and we'll roll after happiness to the last moment of life.

Carb. Without one rub in the carpet, boys.

Long. With your favour, 'squire, how comes this Sir

John English, who treats and entertains all, and is so very proud of being hospitable, to take no care of you? You say, you never personally offended him.

Lurch. Never; but I'll tell you: my father, his sister's husband, died two thousand pounds in his debt, for which he religiously determin'd to punish me his heir. At my father's death I was ten years old, but from that time no intercession could prevail with this most obstinate old mule so much as to see me. But we have no time to lose in words—Come on, my boys, now let us give order for the coach to drive gently up the hill—By this time Sir John, I hope, is ready to receive us. [*Exeunt.*]

Sir John English walking in his hall: Vultur comes blowing in as a running footman.

Vult. Hoh—Phu! phu! with your pardon, Sir, with your pardon; phu! phu!

Sir John. How now, pumps, dimity, and sixty miles a day, whose greyhound are you?

Vult. Phu! phu! do you know, or can you give me any information? phu!

Sir John. Stand still and breathe, puppy; I'll walk a turn or two till your bellows are in order.

Vult. Can you tell me, I say, if my Lord Duke be come in yet?

Sir John. Thy Lord Duke! pr'ythee who is thy Lord Duke, friend?

Vult. I thought every body knew my Lord; his Grace the Duke of Gasconade; his youngest son bears the title of Lord Bite, and his eldest is Marquis of Bamington by the courtesy of England.

Sir John. Art sure he will alight here? I shou'd be proud to entertain his Grace; but I fear thou art mistaken.

Vult. Do you think so, Sir? By your leave, Sir. [*Going.*]

Sir John. Passion o' my fellow, why Pumps, I say come back.

Vult. What is your pleasure, Sir?

Sir John. How happy should I be to entertain his Grace. Did not his Grace name the house with the great turret o' top?

Vult. No, Sir, no!

Sir John.

Sir John. Nor did not you hear him mention the velvet cushions in my little parlour?—Nor my large gilt candlesticks?

Vult. Upon my honour, no.

Sir John. Your honour, scab!—Nor no word dropt about the hangings in the great chamber?

Vult. Not a word. [*Running off, Sir John holds him.*]

Sir John. A pox confine thee! This fellow was born with a whirligig in his heels. Stand still, you lousy seven miles an hour rascal.

Vult. If you stop me a second longer you ruin me.

Sir John. Was there no talk of a plentiful board, open house-keeping, and the good old English hospitality reviv'd somewhere hereabout?—hah!

Vult. Now you come a little nearer the matter.

Sir John. But now in one word—and indeed a question I should have ask'd before—Whom did he send you to?

Vult. To Sir John English, Sir.

Sir John. I am he, you round-about knave, you skip-ditch, I am Sir John English—Well, and will his Grace be here?—I am overjoy'd—nobody; no, nobody of any degree or quality, that is to say—passes by the house—Nobody entertains like me—Well; well; well;—there is a kind of a grace, an art, a manner in these things, which so naturally slips from me—Godso, I forget myself—Where are my servants? What, John Pip-pin, John!

Serv. Did your worship call?

Sir John. Bid that figurative fool Timothy Shacklefigure, Robin Marrowbone the cook, and Doublejugg the butler, and Dorothy and Cicely, and all my servants come hither instantly; I must speak with them all—Here, give this fustian rascal a horn o' beer and a crust—Well, and how does his Grace, good now? I never saw him in my life.

Vult. My Lord has travell'd these five years, an' it please your good worship.

Sir John. Travell'd! good now!—A cup o' beer and a crust, there. The fellow's a fool, I think.

Enter Steward, Cook, Butler, Cicely, and Dorothy.

Sir John. Here Marrowbone, Robin, Robin, some tame ducks, a virgin pullet, a few pigeons, a bit of mut-

30 THE COUNTRY LASSES.

ton, or something or other.—Dorothy, air the great chamber, Dorothy, the fine sheets for his Grace's bed. you understand me! The Holland curtains for the damask bed, edg'd with point : up with 'em ; up with 'em :—unpaper the screens, the sconces, and the andirons.

[*As Sir John gives orders to his Servants Vulture and another Servant are drinking and complimenting on one side.*

Enter Servant.

Serv. An' it please your worship, there's a nobleman and all his servants just alighted at the great gate.

Sir John. Codso ; codso ; we shall be in a fearful hurry—'set my band, Dorothy——' quickly, quickly—So, there, there—His Grace, I profess, has surpriz'd me, taken me so unprepar'd.

Enter Lurcher as a Duke, with his equipage ; runs up to Sir John, and salutes him.

Lurch. Sir John English, I am your most faithful and obedient servant : I could by no means have excused myself, if I had pass'd by, and not paid my respects here.

Sir John. Ah, my Lord, I am your poor unworthy servant ; all I can say is, your Grace is most spaciously welcome.

Lurch. You have a fine house here, Sir John.

Sir John. A dog-hole, may it please your Grace, a mere dog-hole ; I have a clean bed or so, a bottle or two of good wine for a particular ; I brew with the best malt, and can pretend to a bit of good mutton, or so——We shall starve your Grace—but your Grace's goodness——

Lurch. Ever hearty Sir John, the happiest creature breathing (that is your character) when your friends are round you.

Sir John. Good now ! good now ! your Grace is pleasant—Will your Grace taste a glass of old hock—with a little, little dash of palm, before you eat ?

Lurch. By no means, Sir John. Upon my word, you have a fine country round you, a noble estate.

Sir John. No, no, no, my Lord ; what with taxes, repairs, bad tenants, parish charges, and forth ; a poor pittance—a poor pittance !—Will your Grace have a Seville orange squeez'd into a glass of noble racy old canary ?

nary? What does your Grace think of that? Aye, I believe that—or a glass of your right Southam cyder, sweetened with a little old mead, and a hard toast?

Lurch. Not one drop before I eat, tho' you could treat me with liquid gold. Why you live here as if all things were in common without labour or money, like Adam in Paradise.

Sir John. Yes, an it please your Grace, with all my beasts about me. I have a heart, that is all I can boast; I have a heart. Well, well—What news? What news at London? I have a nephew there—I have not seen the profligate these ten years. I beg your Grace not to entreat for him, his father served me scurvily; no, no; what o' that? what o' that?

Enter a Servant with sack and toast on a salver.

Your Grace must taste one glass of sack, 'tis the custom o' the place; it will warm your stomach. Come, come—Ah, this nephew of mine has been a wild lad, very wild.

Lurch. So I have heard.

Sir John. Belike your Grace might know him, for he kept company o' the best. Ah, who but Dick Lurcher! Well, he has, tho' he be but my sifter's son, much of my blood in him, that he has. Does your Grace understand music?

Lurch. I have but a bad ear.

Sir John. Very like, very like. Your Grace has travelled?

Lurch. These five years, Sir.

Sir John. This nephew o' mine has been in comie pranks—Oh, very wild, very wild—but he is like to have all when I die. The whoreson shall have all—I love him—but he shall never find it while I live.

Lurch. What a temptation is here to poison him! How he draws his own picture. *[Aside.]*

Sir John. He is, yet, my Lord, but as I may say *imberbis juvenis*, no more hair on his chin than a midwife. Will your Grace eat an oyster or two before supper?

Lurch. I never do eat oysters.

Sir

Sir John. Never eat oysters ! Good now, good now ! That is wonderful !

Lurch. 'Tis something 'more.' wonderful, that you can doat upon this nephew of yours, and make no provision for him. Has he any fortune of his own ?

Sir John. Not a shilling, Sir. All spent. Do you mark me ? Laud ! he, Sir ! why he is a wit, and a rake, and a gamester ; he has twenty trades besides women. O my conscience he lives upon women. The boy has a fine eye ; *he has my eye.* He shall not have a groat while I live—but when I die——

Lurch. I must have a small matter while you live, dear uncle. [*Aside.*

Sir John. What's your Grace's pleasure ? My ears did not rightly lay hold on your last words.

Lurch. I say, you should allow him a small matter while you live.

Sir John. No, no ; let him look out sharp ; sharp ; he will know better how to manage when I am laid.

Lurch. Do you never steal up to court, Sir John ?

Sir John. Ah, my Lord Duke, I was very fond of it once—I have danced a hornpipe in the drawing-room before now, I have.

Lurch. Have you no inclination to a little snug place, or so ?

Sir John. Ay, my good Lord, if it might be done without much trouble—hunting of places is too much fatigue ; 'tis fit for young people. I can't play at puffs in the corner now ; no, no.

Lurch. Ay, but a teller, a commissioner in the customs, or so, would do you no harm.

Sir John. No, no ; if I might be but deputy-lieutenant ; that indeed, I——

Lurch. I'll speak to the king, it shall be done—— you are so reasonable——

Sir John. Come, come, good now, I see supper is going thro' the hall. Will your Grace give me leave ? Do you hear, take care his Grace's equipage want nothing. I will shew your Grace the way. [*Exeunt.*

END of the SECOND ACT.

A C T III.

Enter Lurcher and his Equipage.

LURCHER.

SO, now to our business, friends. 'Come, come, the vizards.' Where are the masking suits?

Carb. Here, here in the portmanteau, my boy of mettle.

Lurch. Well, gentlemen, I beg leave only to repeat what I said before, be honest and you shall all be safe, have every penny that I owe, and a present into the bargain; but you'll hang yourselves and me too if you purloin a fixpence. I have a particular reason for this sham robbery, which will help me to execute my design with honour and safety.

Carb. Oh, I'll be very honest; don't suspect me, my little bully.

Long. Indeed, Squire, this way of robbing is quite out of our way.

Sneak. I do not like it, 'tis so like robbing. Dear Squire, turn me out of the house—We shall certainly be taken and hanged.

Lurch. Carbuncle, bind all fast: terrify much and hurt little, that's your way.

Carb. Well, well, we'll do our best.

Lurch. Now, ceremonious uncle, with your good worship's leave, I hope to borrow from your awkward generosity a little ready money, however. 'Tis strange this old man would upon no account lend to supply the necessities of his nephew—nay, of a nephew he seems to love too—he will readily pay down to the glare of 'his Grace.' But to business, my friends, to business; you all know your several appointments; away.

[*Exeunt.*]S C E N E *changes.*

Enter Vultur with a pistol, thrusting in Shacklefigure in his shirt and breeches.

Vult. Your money, your money, dog-bolt.

Tim.

Tim. Really I never part with money without a receipt.

Vult. You rascal, a receipt! when did you ever hear of a receipt given by a gentleman of our profession?

Tim. Dear Sir, only let it be then by way of memorandum, that it may appear in my accounts, and that his worship may be satisfied what you shall receive of me in a violent manner.

Vult. Villain, mention one word more of your memorandums and accounts and I'll shoot you thro' the head for understanding arithmetic. Oons, Sir, the nine figures are all authorised thieves.

Tim. No, Sir, with all submission, they are not thieves, but guardians of estates.

Vult. Dog-belt! must I drive a pellet through your scull to confound your figures?

Tim. Ah, Sir, I do not insist upon it——Ah, spare my life, and I'll confess all the money and the plate.

Vult. In, in then, dismal, and I'll give you bond for the money. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter Carbuncle, hauling Doublejugg after him, very drunk, and Sneak and Longbottom at a distance.

Doub. Are you not ashamed to bind an honest man hand and foot, who can neither stand nor go?

Carb. Rot you, do you prate?

Doub. Yes, Sir, I'm given to talk in my cups.

Carb. Where's your plate, you drunken sot, your plate?

Doub. My plate, Sir, why, [*Hiccups.*] why it is, it is——

Carb. Where is it?

Doub. Why it is—to tell you the truth it is locked up.

Carb. Demme, the keys, or I'll slice October.

Sneak. I beg you, Sir, to make no resistance, I intreat you.

Long. Upon my soul, Sir, if you don't comply with our request, you will be very roughly treated.

Doub. I thank you very kindly, but I don't care for drinking a drop more.

Carb. Give me the keys of the cellar, or by Gogmagog.

gog I'll slice you, hash you, carbonade you, pickle you, pepper you, salt you, broil you, and eat you.

Doub. Keep your temper, friend ; there they are. I suppose you have a mind to draw your own liquor—Let me recommend the third hogshhead on the right—Ay, that was the hogshhead that John and I stuck to to-night ; 'tis fine, smooth, mellow, flinging liquor.

Carb. Here, lace the sot's arms, and turn him into the buttery again. [*Exit Carb.*]

Doub. Do your pleasures with me, honest gentlemen ; tho' it runs strangely in my head that I shall dream of thieves. [*Exit Doub. led by Sneak and Long.*]

Enter Lurcher and Carbuncle, with Sir John bound in an old fashioned night-gown and cap, and the rest of the equipage of Lurcher.

Sir John. Gentlemen—for heaven's sake, gentlemen—'tis very well ; I am bound hard enough.

Lurch. Death, Sir, your money. We come for money.

Sir John. Is that all you come for ? Why what a beast was I to unfurnish myself, to put out my money but yesterday ? Alas, poor gentlemen ! What shift shall I make for you ? Pray call again some other time when I may be better provided.

Lurch. Oons, Sir, don't trifle—your money.

Carb. Brimstone and fire—What do you bam us ?

Sir John. No, Sir, pardon me, I don't bam you. If you had come, as they say, in a civil way—Fie upon't, a gentleman would scorn to rob a house in such a manner.

Lurch. Clap a gag in his mouth there—What do you suffer the old dog to chatter for ?—Pluck out his tongue—or knock his teeth down his throat with an ounce of lead.

Carb. Furics and firebrands—what do you bam us, you old prig ?

Sir John. I don't, dear Sir ; Ah dear, sweet Sir, I do not, I do not bam you—only—and if it were your honours' good pleasures, I would intreat you for some small civility—I have a man of quality in my house, and I would not for the world that his Grace should be disturbed.

Lurch.

Lurch. Thunder and lightning, Sir—Do you imagine we have any respect for a lord—no, no, we have secured his Grace, he and all his equipage are bound to their good behaviour, I can tell you that.

Sir John. Who! my Lord! What have you bound his Grace—Irrreparably lost, ruined, undone—I'll have you all hanged—I'll never forgive you. What! bound his Grace! Ill-mannered brutes, to 'misuse' and disturb a man of quality; and in my house, too.

Lurch. Carry him in, bind him to the couch in the bed-chamber, and if he is noisy gag him.

[*Exit Sir John, guarded by Carb.*]

So, this is virtue indeed; virtue deserving a reward, to have power to do wrong and not use it; 'tis being 'chaste under temptation, that gives merit even to 'saints.'—Well, gentlemen, preserve your honours as you have begun, and you'll all deserve statues. Now to our business; let one of us bind all the rest; do you mind me, about it then—for, harkee, 'tis absolutely necessary that this nobleman and all his followers should be found bound in their beds.

Vult. Admirable, that will secure us from all suspicion; but if we bind one another, how will the last man be bound?

Lurch. Why you, Vultur, shall escape; you may be supposed well enough, like a drowsy footman, to be forgot in your litter; there's your excuse—but so soon as ever you have bound us, whip off your mask and your mantle, and unbind the knight. Let me see, 'tis now break of day; to business, to business, lads. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE, *Sir John's Bed-chamber.*

Sir John bound to a couch.

Sir John. What—help—help—Thieves! Murder! Will nobody come near me? Well, well, if there's any virtue in hemp I'll have these rogues hanged. At such a time as this to disturb the tranquility of his Grace's slumbers, as I may so say. Ay, ay, I am bound fast enough. The condition of this obligation——

Enter Vultur.

Odso, Pumps—how comest thou to escape, Pumps? I am heartily glad to see thee, in troth.

Vult.

Vult. They left me snoaring in the garret, and either they did not see or regard me—Pray let me assist your worship.

Sir John. Would I had lain in the garret too—But nothing afflicts me so much, honest Geometrical, as the affront in binding his Grace. Ah, that cuts my heart, [*Vultur loosing Sir John.*] So, so; very well, very well. How shall I approach my Lord? I am not able to look him in the face.

Enter Lurcher with his hands bound, as from his chamber.

Lurch. Who's there?

Sir John. Good-morrow to your Grace.

Lurch. Good-morrow, Sir John; I would give you my hand, but I can't command it. I suppose, Sir, this is the courtesy of the country. [*Sir John unbinds him.*]

Sir John. Alas, alas, this grieves me more than all, to see your Grace thus uncourteously used.

Lurch. Can you guess who they may be, Sir John?

Sir John. I don't know, an it please your Grace—but sure they were the most ungentleman-like thieves—

Lurch. These fellows were some who know and use your house, I warrant.

Sir John. Very like, very like! Well, well, this comes of keeping open house.

Lurch. I made myself known to one of them, and gave him my honour I would not discover him.

Sir John. You did, my Lord?

Lurch. Yes; and do you think the insolent slave would trust me upon my word?

Sir John. He would not?

Lurch. No faith, he asked my pardon; he told me lords' promises were mortal, and commonly died in the birth, or soon after.

Sir John. Insupportable villains! 'How terribly they belched out oaths, my Lord! Did you observe the whiskers of the red-nosed fellow?

Lurch. Ay, very well; they were loaded with gun-powder instead of snuff; I expected every moment to see them take fire at his red nose, and blow his head off his shoulders.

Sir John. Ha; ha! your Grace is pleasant.

Lurch. Too be plain, I fear you fared the worse for me; they had certainly some notice of my being here.

Sir John. Ah, my good Lord Duke! I am sure your Grace fared the worse. Does not your Grace feel a little oddly about the brawn of your wrist?

Lurch. Yes, Sir, a sort of a numbness—the ligament, Sir John, stopped the circulation.

Sir John. Confound them; if I meet with the rascals, it will be my turn, my Lord, to stop the circulation.

Vult. I am sorry your Grace has lost— [To *Lurch.*

Sir John. Hush, hush.

[To *Vult. aside.*

Lurch. What have I lost? Speak!

Sir John. A good night's rest, say.

[To *Vult.*

Vult. Your rest, my Lord, this troublesome night.

Lurch. That's true; no matter. My clothes there. I'll into my chamber and dress, and wait on you immediately, Sir John.

[Exit.

[*Sir John stops Vultur as he is following him.*

Sir John. Harkee, friend, what has thy lord duke lost? Speak softly.

Vult. No more than his Grace may easily spare.

Sir John. That is not the thing. Pray tell me.

Vult. Since your worship will needs know, they took about three hundred pieces of gold, and one hundred pounds in silver, or thereabouts, out of his Grace's strong box.

Sir John. Codso—Codso——‘What! How! there is but one way—it must be done’——Ay, ay—my honour is concerned.——I charge you, I command you don't let his Grace know it—Pray bid my steward Timothy come to me; 'tis fit I repair him. What! in my House!

Enter Timothy.

Tim. So, please your worship, Thomas Maunder hath sent your worship the two hundred pounds for the renewing of his lease.

Sir John. Villains! traitors——

Tim. And John Budge hath paid his Martlemas rent in arrear, and sent your worship the turkeys.

Sir

Sir John. Coxcomb, to trouble me with business now. Come hither, Timothy, what have I lost in this scurvy affair here ?

Tim. Really, upon the strictest inquisition I cannot find that your worship has lost the value of one single sixpence in the whole affair.

Sir John. What dost thou say ? I am amazed.

Tim. 'Tis truth—upon a second casting I find all my cash is numerically the same it was last night—and Doublejug hath all his plate I can assure worship ; there your is not a tea-spoon missing—I believe their design was wholly upon his Grace.

Sir John. Poltroons ! ragamuffins ! as if their whole scheme was purposely to affront him, and him only——
' My house too ! Codso, I am so perplexed I know not ' what to do.' Why it looks, Timothy, as if I was in the plot. Harkee, Timothy, what ready money is there in the house ?

Tim. Three hundred pounds in silver, and two hundred pounds in gold.

Sir John. I could wish you had three hundred pounds in gold—Well, well, we must make shift. Do you hear, take the two hundred pieces of gold and two hundred pounds in silver presently, and watch carefully--carefully, I say, for an opportunity to slip it into his Grace's strong box privately ; tho', Timothy, you must do it privately.

Tim. What would your worship slip it into his Grace's strong box, did you say ? What must I slip ?

Sir John. The money, oaf, the money, I say ; the same sum to a farthing. I charge you let no creature see you.

Tim. Give me leave, in the shortest method imaginable, to reason this affair.

Sir John. Codso ! let me have you do it instantly——
What the good year——

Tim. I say only that your worship has lost something that I did not apprehend before, and that is your senses.

Sir John. Impudent varlet ; do it, or I'll turn your mathematical countenance out of my doors this moment——

[*Exit Timothy.*] ' In truth, in very truth, it must be ' done, and it shall be done, though I sell my whole ' estate——

'estate—'tis fit he should be repaired——This is the
'most happy opportunity.' What, in my house!

Enter Lurcher and Vultur.

Lurch. I overheard him just now, he ordered his steward to place that sum in my strong box, in the room of what he supposed I had lost.

Vult. He did so, the same exactly, only more silver than gold.

Lurch. He prevents my wishes; anticipates my designs. This old gentleman has a generous mind, and however he is disposed to me, there's something great and open in his character. This manner of treatment makes me even delight in the success of my enterprize—Ha, here he comes, I tremble at the sight of him now.

'*Vult.* Collect yourself, man, remember your character, harden your face in the fire of your impudence: let not a muscle start, nor a drop of blood steal from your heart to tell tales in your face. Look as if your power gave authority to your actions, and you were really what you appear only—See, see, Sir John moves towards you.

Lurch. Sir John, your most obedient; I am infinitely obliged to you for the favours I have received—I am sorry my affairs oblige me to leave you so soon.

Sir John. You cover me with blushes—Yet your Grace will, you must do me the honour to take a short homely meal before you travel.

Lurch. I roll away thirty miles before dinner, Sir.

Sir John. Just snatch a bit, as they say—What, Robin! Tim!

Lurch. I shall run away abruptly, if you press me.

Sir John. If your Grace will have it so—Yet let me perish, my Lord, if I know how to look your Grace in the face about the business of last night—'Tis presumptuous in me to ask forgiveness.

Lurch. I forgive you from my soul, Sir John; upon my honour I do; I am sensible how much you suffer every way.

Sir John. Then I remain to the extremest moment of this frail life your Grace's humble debtor.

Lurch. I fear, Sir John, I shall be obliged to trespass upon your faith for the credit of some ready money to
carry

carry me home; this accident has quite unfurnished me, it seems. [*Enter Longbottom who whispers Vultur.*

Sir John. Your Grace may command me entirely, and I am proud——

Vult. My Lord, John came in just now to tell me, that as they were about to pack up the strong box they found all your Grace's money within it. [*To Lurcher.*

Lurch. How! I am surprized, indeed! The money within it!

Vult. Only the species changed, and one hundred pounds in silver more instead of gold.

Lurch. How! I can hardly believe it! what, are we in fairy land here, Sir John? [*Vultur whispers Lurcher.*

Sir John. I am afraid Timothy did not take due care.

[*Aside.*

Lurch. I suspected it, truly—Sir John, this is unkind—my servant tells me your steward was observed to place the money there, and when he was examined, said he did it by your order—You see I would make use of my credit with you: I should not have been put to any inconvenience by my lodging here—generous Sir John—Well, since it is so, give me leave, however, to give you security for the money, and three months hence, when I return from the north, I'll call and repay you.

Sir John. By no means, you confound me, you kill me with confusion; what, is not your Grace's honour sufficient.

Lurch. But we are all mortal, you know.

Sir John. Dear your Grace, excuse me—Dear your Grace, spare me.

Lurch. Well, Sir, I am your humble debtor; if ever you come to court again——

Sir John. Ah, my Lord!

Lurch. Is the coach ready?

Vult. 'Tis at the gate, my Lord.

Lurch. Sir John, yours—Pray take particular care next time a man of quality lies in your house that no thieves disturb him.

Sir John. Ah, my good lord!

Lurch. Not a step further.

Sir John. Pray give me the honour to attend your Grace to your coach.

Lurch. No, no, by no means.

Sir John. 'Tis my duty—Good your Grace.

Lurch. You will be obeyed—Remember only when I see you at Bamington—I shall command in my turn.

Sir John. Your Grace overwhelms me with your goodness. [Exit.

END of the THIRD ACT.

A C T IV.

Enter Modely and Heartwell.

MODELY.

WAS ever any thing so agreeable ?

Heart. What palace could have entertained us like this cottage ?

Mod. The blunt old man gave us a meal, plain and undisguised.

Heart. Artless and honest, like himself. Did you observe the sweetness and purity of this little dwelling ?—The linen smelt of lavender and roses—The honey-suckles hid the light of our small casement—

Mod. And mixed their odours with the sharp morning air, and waked me early.

Heart. Why, did you sleep ?

Mod. Like a whipt top. Did not you ?

Heart. Ah, no ; my heart was dancing the galloping nag ; my spirits were in arms, and all the mobility of my blood roared out incessantly, Flora, Flora.

Mod. What ! then you are really in love ; that is, *à la Romanski*.

Heart. So much in love, ' Modely, as any of those old-fashioned heroes were ever feigned to be, whose names stand in blank verse upon record, and sigh by their representatives from generation to generation.

Mod. How do you know ?

Heart. Oh, by a thousand symptoms ; ' my heart beats quick at her name ; I have her constantly before my eyes ; ' fortune, fame, friendship, honour, women, are in less ' value with me, when compared with her ; all the faculties of my soul and body are her slaves ; I could live in ' a cave

'a cave everlastingly with her alone;' I could fight for her, I could die for her, I could marry her.

Mode. What, you have a mind to put your passion to a violent death. Marry her!—Do so, do so; 'tis a certain cure.

Heart. Be not so severe; her beauty, George, will make my joys immortal.

Mode. I can't believe either in the immortality of her beauty or your passion.

Heart. Look on her then, and be converted.

Mode. Convert thyself, lad, and don't look so like the picture of heigh-ho! 'in the frontispiece of Cupid's kalendar. Adieu.'

[*Exit.*]

Enter Flora.

Flora. My uncle, Sir, would speak with you—Nay, no more love; I intreat; I petition. I know by your looks what you mean. Come, leave this whimsical dumb cant of sighing and ogling, and tell me, in plain English, what you'd have.

Heart. Could not you help one to a little ready beauty?

Flora. What would you give for a small purchase that way?

Heart. Heart for heart, my dear.

Flora. That was the old way, they say. Before money was in fashion, they used to barter in kind.

Heart. Let us renew that honest custom in the age of innocence and love.

Flora. Have you a clear title to the thing you would sell? That heart of yours, I-warrant, has been mortgaged over and over.

Heart. Humph! It has been a little dipped; but I have always honourably redeemed it, child.

Flora. Have you a lawful assignment from your last mistress?

Heart. I was as free as air till I beheld those eyes.

[*Bowing very low.*]

Flora. Ah, that humble, killing bow!—Go on. Now I know you are to talk of chains and daggers and flames and dying and darts.

Heart. Is it possible to hide a passion, which, tho' my tongue is silent, breaks out in every look and motion?

Flora. Wonderful pretty this! But, Sir, I know the natural

natural whirl of the mind of man ; 'tis as inconstant as a turn-stile, his heart's a tennis-ball, his inclination's the racket, and his passions drive it round the world.

Heart. Dare only to try me, and if you like me not, discharge me.

Flora. She deserves to be robbed who takes a servant that brings a certificate of his being a thief.

Heart. 'Tis not engraven here, I hope.

Flora. Yes, truly, there is a sort of a faithless, loving, London, lying air, that hangs upon your features, and frightens me terribly.

Heart. Then propose your own security ; bind me as you please.

Flora. Agreed. Suppose then I liked you well enough to make a husband of you ; would you marry me ?—Look ye there——confounded—astonished at once—Mentioning the word only, has put the man into a cold sweat, I profess.

Heart. People who marry for love, my dear, are like those who give bonds with interest for large sums of ready money, and squander the principal ; so in a little time are both beggars and prisoners.

Flora. I had rather be a beggar afterwards, than a bubble beforehand. But go on to your purpose, Sir.

Heart. I would have you leave this four old man, and this rustic cot, and take your flight with me and love—Love shall conduct us with his purple wings, joys shall meet joys in circles, and new pleasures chase the swift hours away. Thou shalt be dearer to me than any wife can be ; ' every moment of our lives shall be beyond the wedding-nights of the dull vulgar.'

Flora. So, 'tis out at last. What, then I am to be your mistress only, your pretty *bella favorita*, your little private hunting-seat ; have every inconvenience of a wife, with the scandal of a wench, and perhaps be forced to cluck a brood of illegal chickens after me, and peck about the parish for my subsistence ?

Heart. What horrible ideas dost thou form ! No, my dear, it shall not be within my power to wrong you ; I will settle two hundred pounds a year upon you for life, and provide for all our children.

Flora.

Flora. With a sham lawyer, and a counterfeit settlement.

Heart. Choose your own lawyer, take your own security, make your own trustees; you shall have an inheritance in my heart and my land as firm as if you were born to it.

Flora. To be serious, then, since you are so, I'll tell you, all the inheritance I boast or wish for, is this low, humble cottage, and a mind, I hope a virtuous mind, that cannot, even in this situation, bear dishonour. Take back your worthless trifle of a heart, and your more worthless promises, and know, I scorn as much to yield to the mean bargain of your hireling passion, as you do to submit to honourable love. [Going.]

Heart. Stay, you shall stay—Let me but think a moment—

Flora. Think then, ungrateful man, what 'tis you do. My father; whose prop I am, the stay of his old age, taught me, with pious care, to tread the paths of virtue: how would it tear the strings of his old heart to see me fallen at once to shame and infamy? You call yourself a gentleman, and say, the laws of faith and honour, when they're broken, ask life for recompence: the lie is death; yet you would falsify your trust to him, defraud him of his treasure in his child, inhospitably murder your good host, the man whose house you entered with a trust that would to common thieves, under these limitations, be sacred and inviolable.

Heart. Oh, thou hast touch'd my soul! I feel thy words; a conscious pang stabs thro' my heart, and converts me with shame. Yet, Flora, yet I hope you will forgive me, when you think how strongly we are biased to what is wrong. Custom, family, fortune, I know not what terrible words, make me fear to suffer in opinion only.

Flora. I know the disparity of our fortunes; I know you fear your family and name should suffer. Believe me, Sir, they suffer more when you but tempt an honest mind from virtue.

Heart. Oh, Flora, Flora, thou hast conquered! I own my crime, and humbly beg you will forgive it. Thy words, bright excellence, charm like thy beauty; thy soul's

soul's refined without society or courts ; nature has form'd thee fair as her own humble lilies ; no family can mend, no education teach, no habit improve your manners.

Flora. " Oh, man, for flatt'ry and deceit renown'd ! "

Heart. In you I see the most perfect virtue cloathed in all the charms of the most elegant form ; in you I see all that we know of heaven, of those celestial lights that move for ever, virtue and beauty joined. Thus let me kneel, thus lowly at your feet, and ask your hand, your hand and heart in marriage ; let the priest now join us. Will you, dare you trust your convert ?

Flora. Away with this ! Think seriously, seriously, Sir. Can you for ever love me, for your life ? A poor country girl, without a portion, without one penny for posterity ? Take time, and think on't.

Heart. I would marry thee, tho' I wrought with my hands for thy daily support. My whole soul, all my wishes, are centered in thee.

Flora. Ay, but when we are married they'll move eccentrically again. Marriage is a tedious journey in a heavy road ; many an honest fellow, who set out briskly at first, has been heartily tired before he reached his inn at night.

Heart. I must not, cannot, will not live without thee. ' No hero in romance, no shepherd in pastoral, no poet's imagination, was ever more in love. Can you deny me ? ' Give me your hand ; let me be yours for ever.

Flora. Come, Sir, I see you're a man of courage, and if my uncle consents——

Heart. I'll go in, and ask it without ceasing——But shall I then be sure of yours ?

Flora. I don't know——But I think you do what you will with me. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Modely.

Mode. I can't imagine where Heartwell is gone, nor can I find the girls. I have hunted every——Ha, Miss ! have I caught you ?

Enter Aura.

Aura. Sir, the tea is ready.

Mode. Tea ! Why, you live within doors as politely as the people of our world, as elegantly. This cottage is like

like a diamond in the quarry, all rough without, within all light and beauty. Does your father drink tea too?

Aura. No, Sir, his constant breakfast is a pipe and a pot of October. 'He hates your soup-maigre of element and herbs; he rails at the women for sending to t'other world for their cups and their breakfasts; and says more reputations have been broke over our tea-tables than China dishes. In short, that our sex is all China ware, fair and frail, and never flaw'd till used.

'*Mode.* This severity in old age is not disagreeable; it becomes him, and is, like his own October, sharp and sound.

'*Anra.* But he expects us all this while. [*Going.*

Mode. Hold, hold! Why, do you think I'll be served in this manner?

Aura. What manner?

Mode. How well you kept your appointment last night, gypsiey!

Aura. What appointment?

Mode. To meet me in the arbor at the lower end of the orchard, alone.

Aura. Pleasant! I meet a man at night in an arbor alone! Oh, hideous! What should I do there?

Mode. Do! Why, I was to have made love to you in soft nonsense, you were to have been very angry and very kind, and so I was to have ravished you with your own consent, that's all. Ah! a blush upon a half consent looks so sweetly by moon-light.

Aura. How came this wicked imagination into your head?

Mode. In a dream, deary; 'tis pity it was not real.

Aura. Go, you're a devil.

Mode. You're an angel.

Aura. Begone—I fly thee, Satan— [*Exit running.*

Mode. I'll follow thee to the world's end, thou temptation for a saint. [*Exit.*

SCENE, *the Green before the Cottage.*

Enter Heartwell, Flora, and several Countrymen and Women, 'dressed as from a wedding, a blind old fiddler before them, one of the country fellows singing the following catch:

' He that marries a lass
' For love and a face,
' Without money, is still in a pitiful case :
' Or he that for money alone
' Puts a wedding ring
' On an ugly rich thing,
' Does but tie himself scurvily down :
' But he that has money and love in good store,
' Has all the world in a string.

' 1 *Count.* Come, neighbours, we'll dance at the
' squire's wedding, as they say'n, till the sun rise upon
' us, and stare us out o' countenance.

' 2 *Count.* Ah, how she do look, Dick ! there will be
' merry work anon, i' fackins.

' 1 *Count.* Come, lead up, Clody ; thou art so full of
' prate and waggery, as they say'n. [*A dance.*]

Heart. My good neighbours, I thank you all for these
favours. I hope you'll dine with me to-morrow. I beg
you'll excuse me now. In the mean time, here is some-
thing to drink this lady's health.

[*Excunt all but Heartwell and Flora.*
My wife ! — my dear ! — I am now richer than the
sea ; I have a treasure in thee more valuable than what
the earth contains. ' Oh, my love ! my heart at thy sight
' feels an extatic gaiety, a joy that enlarges and opens
' my mind, and throws a prospect before me of lasting
' happiness.

' *Flora.* To keep alive this passion will be now all my
' ambition, the very extent of my best hopes. I blush
' to say, my only fears were lest I should have lost you.
' But my uncle will impatiently expect us ; he will hard-
' ly believe we are married, till he sees the voucher, the
' certificate or the parson.'

Enter Shacklefigure.

' *Heart.* How now ! what solemn piece of formality,
what

what man of wires is this, that moves towards us? He stirs by clock-work, like St. Dunstan's giants; he prepares to open his mouth, as if he could not speak without an order of court.

Shack. Save you, right worshipful Sir.

Heart. And you eke also, 'and send you salt enough
' with your tears to scour away your sins.'

Shack. Sir John English, my most bountiful lord and master, hearing by the mouth of common fame——

Heart. Common fame is a common liar, friend; you have your news from the worst hands.

Shack. Sir, you break the thread of my discourse.

Heart. Well, join it again, and go on.

Shack. Sir John English, my most bountiful lord and master, hearing, by the mouth of common fame, that you were joined in holy wedlock to the niece of his good tenant, Solomon Freehold, sends his wishes ambassadors by me, the humblest of his vassals, that you and your fair bride will be pleased to sup and consummate your marriage at his house.

Heart. Verily, thou hast well unfolded thy message; now plait it up carefully again, friend, and give my service to thy master, Sir John, and say, that my wishes are to be private for a night or two.

Shack. Sir, I shall report—or carry back your answer accordingly.

Flora. Stay, friend, stay a moment.—[*To Heart.*] If I could prevail upon you, you should grant Sir John's request.

Heart. 'Twill interrupt our happiness. Noise is an enemy to transport. I am so covetous, I would have thee for ever alone.

Flora. But Sir John has always been to me the most obliging, kindest, best-natured man; at this time it would look like ingratitude to refuse him. Give me my request; 'tis the first I ever made. I'll go before, and prepare the old gentleman to receive you, and prevent all ceremonious trouble. You'll be there in an hour.

Heart. I can deny thee nothing. Tell your master I'll wait on him.

[*Exeunt Shack. and Flora.*]

Enter Modely.

Mode. Ha, George! I was looking for you. What shall

50 THE COUNTRY LASSES.

shall I do? You shall advise me. Shall I marry my dear little girl, or no?

Mode. To marry for love, my friend, is confining your whole body for the error of your eyes only.

Heart. Ay, but where one loves, one would keep a woman to one's self.

Mode. Ha, ha! keep a woman to one's self. He that purchases an estate where all the world take a right of common, may build churches for atheists, and almshouses for misers.

Heart. But a little legal inclosure is for the comfort of our lives, when the land has been carefully and virtuously cultivated.

Mode. Why, you don't really intend to marry this girl?

Heart. Really, I believe I shall.

Mode. Indeed! Ah, pretty!--Do'e, do'e, fling two thousand pounds a year away upon a cottage, Marian—take the refuse of a bumpkin to your marriage-bed, and after that be the cuckold of the plowman.

Heart. How! What?

Mode. Ay, ten to one but some finewy thresher, who has warmed her brisk blood at a hop or a wake, steps into your place, and delivers down a posterity of young flail-drivers, known by the name of Heartwell—

Heart. Fie, Modely! no more of this. You know her virtue is un sullied as her beauty; besides, her education has been above these clods.

Mode. Her education has been among them. But why should you marry her? Shew her some gold, man; promise her mountains, bargain for her, purchase her, run away with her, keep her two or three years, breed out of her—Why should you buy the whole piece, when you may have a suit for a sample? Wear her a little, and then—

Heart. Sir, I bore your base reflections with temper, while I believed your meaning was friendly; but now I find you indulge your ill-nature at the expence of a virtuous woman—

Mode. Oh, oh! you are grave—that is you are growing mad indeed, and begin to rattle your matrimonial chain.

Heart. I am talking of religion to a heretic, of morals to a libertine.

Mode.

THE COUNTRY LASSES. 57

Mode. Well, well, then it shall have its toy. Did it cry for a wife? It shall be tied to it, if nothing else will do; like an idiot with a horn-book at his girdle. It shall have a ginger-bread wife too, but without any gilding.

Heart. Pr'ythee, George, don't make me angry with thee in earnest.

Mode. What is the matter with the man? Art thou mad? Thou art as uneasy as if thou wert already married, and had found the corn in the field, when you did not know the grain was sowed.

Heart. Why, then, to confess the honest truth, I am married.

Mode. Married! When?

Heart. Just now.

Mode. To whom?

Heart. To Flora.

Mode. Very good! And so you come to know, it seems, whether you shall give bond for the debt, when there's an execution upon the goods.

Heart. Well, George, but now you know my case, tell me, as a friend, only your opinion of what I have done.

Mode. Done! Pox, you have done a very silly thing; sold yourself for a waxen baby, a painted moppet, a gay, prating, party-coloured paraquito, which little master will play with till he is sick of it, and then in a gloomy mood be ready to twist its neck off. Ha, ha! a very pretty fellow, to make a vow to be always in the same mind. Oons! you look as if you walked upon your head, with your brains in your breeches.

Heart. Thou art so loose, thy imagination wonders what virtue is. There is no talking with thee. Come, go with me to Sir John's to supper, and be as much a wag there as you please.

Mode. No, I have other game in view—Farewel—Yonder she starts. Ay, there's a mademoiselle I'll have cheaper; she is not wicked enough yet to ask such an unconscionable price as matrimony. [*Exeunt.*]

Modely re-enters with Aura.

Aura. Oh, Lud! you have brought all the blood in my body into my face.

Mode. Colour is the life of beauty. Can you be angry with me for making you more handsome. I swear I will be ever faithful. Come, you little dear rogue; you shall trust me.

Aura. Never, never. Oh, lud! don't ask me. My heart beats as if it would break a way thro' my breast.

Mode. What, won't you trust me with a kifs?

Aura. That's a trifle. [*Kissing her.*] You're impudent.

Mode. You're idle.

Aura. I swear I'll cry out.

Mode. You'll expose yourself.

Aura. Lud, Sir! what do you mean?

Mode. To wrestle for a fall only. There's a couch in the next room will tell no tales. This way, my dear—
[*Struggling.*] Nay, now you are a little fool.

Aura. [*Getting one band loose, strikes him.*] I'll tear your eyes out.

Mode. I shall find the way blindfold, thou dear, dear, ill-natured devil—She is confounded strong [*Pulling her.*

Aura. Help, help, for Heaven's sake! murder, murder.

Enter Freehold, and two threshers, who run up to Modely, disarm and seize him.

Free. Ah, ware haunches, ware haunches!—There—So, so; the hunt is safe. [*Exit Aura.*] What vicious cur is this, poaching by himself? What, my good friend, Mr. Modely? Why, thou art a very impudent fellow. What canst thou say for thyself now, ha?

Mode. Say! why, I say your kinswoman here, was very uncivil, and all that.

Free. You would have been too civil, and all that. Come, bring him along; he shall have a fair race for it. Our moat, Sir, is somewhat wide, but not very clear; now, if you can out-run, and out-swim Towser, I believe you'll not make a hunting-seat of my house again in haste.

Mode. Consider, Sir, you were once a gentleman yourself.

Free. Sentence is passed; don't trouble the court; I'll hear nothing. You're an idle fellow, that strolls about the country pilfering of maidenheads. What, did I not catch you in the fact, ha? But that I have a
decent

‘decent regard for posterity, I would have cut away the
‘only credentials you have of humanity, and make a
‘walking sign of you.’

Mode. Sir, I am a gentleman, and expect to be so used.

Free. How?

Mode. Take off your bull-dogs; let me speak one word with you alone, and I’ll tell you.

Free. Come on, Sir; I’ll trust you; I’ll give you more credit than you deserve. Do you hear, itay without, that you may be ready when I call. [*Excunt country fellows.*] Well, Sir, what have you to say now, why sentence should not pass?

Mode. Say! why, I say, Sir, that what I did was according to the common law; that the common law is custom, and that it has been the custom, time out of mind, for us young fellows, whose blood flows briskly, to use no ceremony with a wholesome cherry-cheek, whether on haycock, meadow, barn, or bed.

Free. Extremely well! and so you would have knocked her down, and ravished her.

Mode. A little agreeable force is absolutely necessary; it saves the woman’s honour, and gives such an edge to the appetite——

Free. Ay. And so, having finished this honourable affair, that is, having robbed the poor girl of all that could be dear or valuable, having dishonoured her, disgraced yourself, and done an irreparable wrong; why, you could have hummed a tune, taken a pinch of snuff, sat down perfectly satisfied in the probity of the action, and have reconciled yourself to your own reflections with as much ease as you drink a dish of tea. What provokes you to this injustice?

Mode. Love, love and joy, old wormwood. I have made a league with my youth, to get the better of time; I have fast hold of his forelock, and won’t let a moment pass without enjoyment.

Impatient sense, and nature dies,
And love a second life supplies.
Gentle boy, then fill my cup,
A bumper, Cupid, fill it up
With youth, and wit, and noble fires,
Vigorous health, and young desires.

Free. Humph!—a poetical fop too. But let me tell you, friend, you mistake your passion; 'tis not love, but lust. Love is a generous volunteer, lust a mercenary slave; love is a court of honour in the heart, but what you call love is only a scandalous itching, a rebellion in the blood.

Mode. I don't know what you would have by love and desire; I think they are only different words for the same meaning. Liking begets love, love desire, desire rage, and rage rapture.'

Free. This fellow's in a blaze; his blood has set him all in fire.

Mode. I love the whole sex, Sir; the beautiful I adore as angels; the ugly, as Indians do the devil, for fear; the witty persuade me, the innocent allure me, the proud raise my ambition, and the humble my charity; the coquette shews me a pleasing chase, the false virtue of the prude gives oil to my flame, and the good-natured girl quenches it. There's a pleasure in pursuing those that fly, and 'tis cowardly not to meet the fair-one that advances. Say what you will, I am in love, in love, old boy, from head to foot; I am Cupid's butt, and stand ready to receive his whole quiver.

Free. I'll tell thee what thou art; thou art a romance finely bound and gilt, and thy inside is full of silly love and lies, senseless and showish.

Mode. And thou art a satire, as the title says, against vice and immorality; 'but thy inside contains a weak indulgence only to the overflowings of a rank gall, full of ill-nature and pride. Yet art thou silly enough to think virtue consists in railing against vice, like those jilts, who think they cover their own infamy by abusing other women.

Free. Well said! now, thou aimest at truth, I like thee.

Mode. Good-nature only ought to be the test of good sense, as a man proves his faith by his charity.

Free. Well, then, my faith is, that thou art a modern whoremaster, that is, a villain; and I have charity enough to tell thee so.

Mode. You mistake your humour for your virtue, and fancy, because you are a cynic, you're a philosopher too.

' too. Pr'ythee, polish thyself, my dear rough diamond.' What, I think thou art the fourest old fellow that ever I met with. You invite a man to your house here, and then deny him the only tit-bit he has a mind to.

Free. You have broke every social virtue, and yet impudently imagine you are in the character of a gentleman.

Mode. How, Sir! you grow scurrilous. [*Going.*

Free. Nay, you shall hear me, or I'll recall my Myrmidons; they wait my word, you know. A gentleman ought not to dare to think of doing wrong to any. His love, his friendship, his courage, his generosity, his religion, his word and his honour, should be inviolably bound to the strict laws of virtue.

Mode. This may be the picture of a faint; but for the character of a fine gentleman, 'tis as unlike it, my dear——

Free. As you are. Your love is lust, your friendship interest, your courage brutal butchery, your bounty usury, your religion hypocrisy, your word a lie, and your honour a jest.

Mode. Ha, ha! very concise and smart; but I take nothing ill of thee. Thou art like a frosty morning, sharp and wholesome. Dear Sir, your most obedient servant; you see I have stood your Jobation very patiently. And so, compliments being passed on both sides, I humbly take my leave.

Free. Hold, Sir, I demand satisfaction for the wrong you have done my family.

Mode. With all my heart, old boy; your time, place, and weapons. Will you use seconds?

Free. Ay, and thirds too, if you provoke me. Look ye, friend, according to the justest sentiments I can form of this affair, you ought to be knocked o' the head, extinguished for the good of society, as I would one o' my cattle that had got a disemper in his blood which made him run a muck at the herd. But custom, that invades the rights of nature, and makes us act by senseless example, says you are a gentleman, and have a right to justify one wrong, by committing another.

Mode. Pox o' your preamble! come to the point, Sir.

Free. The young woman you have wronged has a servant, Sir, a young Oxonian, a lover of hers, who at present

56 THE COUNTRY LASSES.

sent lives with his kinsman, Sir John, above; he shall meet you, and bleed you for this fever. I know the young fellow loves her, and has spirit to do himself justice. I think that is the cant you have for it. He shall meet you half an hour hence in the meadow behind the farm alone.

Mode. Odso!—Your bullies about you too—Well, Sir, I'll meet him.

Free. If you fail, I'll stick your name upon every tree in the parish, for a coward, a poltroon, that dares not fight in a wrong cause; and that is a greater reproach to a man of modern honour, than a thief or a murderer.

[*Exit Freehold.*]

Mode. An ill-natured old puppy, to engage a man in a quarrel too—However, I think I am pretty well off; this is much better than the discipline of Towser and the ditch, or than my friend's matrimonial comfort; though 'tis very ugly, methinks, too, to fight upon an idle business here. But 'tis the fashion, the mode, and, as old Crabtree says, right or wrong, we are obliged to obey it.

- ' Thus fashionable folly makes us stake
- ' The loss of virtue for our honour's sake :
- ' Stronger than nature tyrant custom grows ;
- ' For what we venture life to keep, we lose.'

[*Exit.*]

END of the FOURTH ACT.

A. C T V.

SCENE, *a Close behind the Farm.*

Enter Modely.

MODELY.

A Fine evening, really, for a cool thrust or two—Where is the warrior that is to entertain me here? 'Egad, I wish 'twas over; I don't like it; it sits but qualmishly upon my stomach. Oh! yonder he comes cross the stile—No, that's a boy, I think. I suppose he has sent some formal excuse; the women have locked him up, the country is raised, or the justices have sent their warrants forth to stop all military proceedings, and make up the matter over a cup of October.

Enter

Enter Aura, in Boy's Cloaths.

Aura. Your servant, Sir.

Mode. Yours, Sir.

Aura. I am invited hither, Sir, to do justice to an injured beauty, whom I have the honour to be well with—and I suppose you are my man.

Mode. Thy man, lovey ; and what then ;

Aura. Why, then, Sir, on the behalf of that fair one, I demand the honourable amends, Sir. To use violence to a lady is an affront not to be put up ; to tear the boughs and offer to haul down the fruit before it was consenting, kindly ripe—If you had climbed up the ladder of her affections, and gathered it regularly with the consent of the owner, there had been no harm done.

Mode. Ha ! thou art a very pretty metaphoraical priggster. Hark ye, child, go home presently, or I will gather a handful of nettles under that hedge, and whip thee most unmercifully.

Aura. Huh, huh ! Goliath the second. How he struts and bounces ! Sir, I shall whip you thro' the guts, ' or ' make a pair of bellows of your lungs, for this arrogance. ' Know, Sir, that what I want in nerve and bone, I make ' up in vigour and youth.' What are your weapons ?

Mode. Nettle-tops, infant, nettle-tops.

Aura. What, are you for your country diversions of this sort ? Flails, cudgels, scythes, back-swords, oaken-towels, or wrestling ?

Mode. Wouldst thou have me wrestle with a bulrush ?

Aura. Ah ! ' I have brought many a stouter man than you down, before now, with my Cornish hug. Or are you for the town gallantries, fingle rapier, sword and dagger, sword and pistol, fingle pistol, blunderbuss, demi-cannon, culverin, howitzer, mortar-piece, or barrel of gunpowder ? I am ready, at any of these weapons, to wait your commands.

Mode. Look thee, thou impertinent insect, thou may'st be troublesome, tho' thou canst not be hurtful ; therefore, if thou fliest about my face thus, I shall be forced to pat thee down with my hand, and tread thee out.

Aura. Humph !—You're very pert.

Mode. I ain so. Pray, tell me, tho', what interest have you

you in this lady, that she has engaged your haughty littleness in her affairs ?

Aura. Who, I, Sir ? Oh, I have been her premier minister a great while. ‘ She is a fine woman really, considering she has been rusticated from her birth too ; her only fault is, poor creature, she is doatingly fond of me ; I dress her ; I undress her ;’ by her good will, she would not suffer any living thing to stick a pin about her besides me.

Mode. Indeed ! and so thou art her play-fellow, her gentle refreshment, her pretty pillow-boy, her afternoon’s cordial, and her tea at breakfast, her evening’s slumber and her morning’s indolence.

Aura. You are superlatively smart. Sir, I shall give you to understand instantly, that the reputation of a lady is not thus impiously to be sported with—Oons, eat your words ; down with them again this moment, or I’ll ram the insolent epithets back again with the hilt of my sword.

Mode. Cool thyself, Narcissus, cool thyself, child ; relieve thy reason with a dram of reflection. ’Tis the town-talk : the whole village, and all the parishes round ring of it. I am sure thou wouldst not die a martyr to falsehood. Why, thy engagements there are known to every body ; ’tis no secret, my prettiness.

Aura. Ay, Sir, ’tis true ; bus ’tis not so gallant to enter into particularities of that sort. Tho’, as you say, indeed, I am sensible ’tis no secret. The affair has made a noise ; the fury of the poor creature’s passion did now and then blind her discretion. I think this is the seventh duel I have engaged in for her and Flora—the seventh ; no, the eight—there were three justices, two excisemen, a parson, and yourself——

Mode. Thou art a terrible little squib. What had Flora to do in this quarrel ? What ! you have had her too, hah ?

Aura. Ah, Sir, she ; but she is married. I am glad of it, faith, very glad of it. Poor man ! your friend I mean. I hope he is not apt to be jealous ? ‘ In troth, ‘ I believe she is *enceint*.’ If his son and heir steps into the world a month or two before the usual time, I could
with

with he would rather impute it to the forwardness of his boy, than the ill conduct of his wife.

Mode. Thou art the most impudent, wicked, little, bragging, lying son of a whore that ever I met with.

Aura. Demme, Sir, son of a whore in your teeth!—What! Because I have reprieved you, suffered you to breathe a minute or two longer, while I diverted you with my gallantries—you grow insolent.

Mode. Ha, ha! thou art a very potgun charged with air.

Aura. And thou art a wooden blunderbuss without any charge at all; 'a mere pasteboard giant. What! I 'am not such a pigeon neither, to be scared with a goat's 'hair beard and a dagger of lath.'

Mode. Thou most insignificant teizing terrier, thou ferret of a coney-warren—by heavens, if thou dost provoke me, I will cut thee into minced-meat, and have thee dished up for thy mistress's wedding-dinner.

[*Modely draws, and advances towards Aura.*

Aura. [*Advancing too, and presenting a pistol.*] Put up your sword; put it up, I say—Death, Sir, this instant, or you die! [*Modely puts up his sword.*] So, so—

Mode. Hah! What have you these tricks too, my little bully?

Aura. Very well; now you have obeyed me, I'll use you like a gentleman. You have a longer reach than I, and therefore it may not be so reasonable to engage with single sword. Here, take one of these; this, or this; which you please: [*Presenting pistols.*] You may change it, or draw it and recharge it, if you suspect my honour.

Mode. How are they loaded?

Aura. Equally, Sir, with a brace of balls.

Mode. What can be the meaning of all this? Sure the young dog is not in earnest. [*Aside.*

Enter Freehold.

Free. Hey, my brave boy! my cock o' the game! my lad of mettle! my Cupid in arms! there, he stands his ground to an inch. I told you he would find you sport, my Covent-Garden friend—All I can say is, he shoots flying finely.

Mode.

60 THE COUNTRY LASSES.

Mode. Hah! I am glad you are come, farmer: we were just going to be serious here. This little huff-bluff Hector will let nobody lie with your family but himself, it seems: pr'ythee let us make up this affair, old gentleman. Egad, if I am in the wrong—why—methinks it might be better—I don't know—I can't fancy this cool way of murder, with a flash and a pop—

Free. Oh, Sir, he is a perfect Spaniard with an English heart. I know him—nothing will satisfy him but your blood.

Aura. No, Sir—nothing but your blood—your blood, Sir!

Mode. Say you so? Why then if nothing else will do, have at you, my boy.—‘I’ll burn your fair periwig, i’faith.’

Free. Look at your flint and your prime: are they in right order?

Aura. I warrant you. Please to stand wide a little, Sir; a ball may graze. [*To Freehold.*] Now, come on, Sir. For want of a cloak let us retreat from each other five yards, then turn round upon our heels at one motion, and let fly. Are you ready?

[*They retire and turn round, Modely fires, and Aura drops as if shot.*]

Free. Oh, he is shot! he is killed! my poor boy is murdered.

Mode. What have I done? Curse on my steady hand.

Free. Help! Murder! Murder! Help!

Enter Countrymen.

Mode. Say you so? Nay, then 'tis time to save one; by your leave, as fast as my feet or my fears can carry me.

[*Exeunt all but Free. and Aura.*]

Aura. What are they gone? Is the stage clear?

Free. Hah, let me kiss thee, my dear little girl; this was admirably performed. I was afraid you durst not have stood the powder.

Aura. No, no—I put in but half a charge, and no wadding—I had really much ado to provoke him to fight: so, so, we'll shew him a little country-play now; we'll teach him to ravish, I warrant.

Free. Well, I must wait upon his companion, honest Heartwell.

THE COUNTRY LASSES. 61

Heartwell. He expects me to attend him to Sir John's, according to his wife's request.

Aura. Do so ; while I slip the back way through the orchard, into the hall-house, and undress, that I may be with you time enough to finish my part : this is a day of business, i' faith. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE, *the Hall of Sir John's House.*

Enter 'Doublejug and' Timothy Shacklefigure.

' *Shac.* Verily, Madam Betty hath invited every creature in the parish to-morrow.

' *Doub.* And Sir John hath commanded me to throw the cellar-doors open, and make the whole country reel — Here will be brave randing, i' faith ; all the sleeples in the country are to rock—and I have summoned together all the bagpipes, tabors, drums, trumpets, and the whole fraternity of cats-guts within seven miles round.

' *Shack.* One would imagine Madam Betty stood candidate for the county——

' *Doub.* And was to drink her way to Westminster thro' a sea of October.

' *Shack.* What are all these uncommon preparations designed for ?

' *Doub.* Nay, I don't know ; I don't inquire into state affairs, but I shall know more on't when I am drunk ; for then I am very peery.

' *Shack.* In the mean time mind your affairs ; we have much business to do. [*Exit Doub.*] I must wait here, to introduce the strange gentleman, whom my master is so fond of.'

Enter Heartwell and Freehold.

Heart. How could you use a lover so roughly ?

Free. A rough lover should be used so : why he was just going to knock her down——I suppose that is his method.

Heart. And the little girl stood his fire gallantly ?

Free. O, most heroically ! O' my conscience, I believe she would have fought him in earnest.

Heart. Is he taken ?

Free. Ay, ay, we have him fast.

F

Heart.

62 THE COUNTRY LASSES.

Heart. Well, then let his fears pay the price of his sin : I think his punishment very just. But see where old Steddy-muscle stands in form to introduce us.

Free. Ay, come on now ; you shall see a worthy piece of antiquity, a right bred old English country gentleman ; one who keeps open house the whole year round, and yet never took or paid a penny for a vote in his life.

Shack. Sir, with the greatest submission, if it shall be your worship's good pleasure, I will wait on the company within, and know if it shall be their pleasure to receive you. [Exit Shack.]

Free. Do so, old Stiff-rump, do. This fellow keeps himself as regular as his day-book.

Heart. Company ! What company ?

Free. A friend or two only, perhaps, that Sir John has invited to a dance, or so.

Heart. A dance—a friend—'Sdeath, you distract me ! Excuse me to him, I beg you.

Free. No, no : what you must bear with a little noise at first—A bridegroom, and afraid of a fiddle ! But see the door opens, and the company are moving towards us.

SCENE opens. *Flora and two Women Servants appear dressed genteelly ; they move down towards Heartwell.*

Heart. What's here ? Ladies too ! So, I find I must run thro' the impertinence of the night. I would give a little finger now to be in bed, the curtains drawn, and all quiet, with my dear girl by my side. So—it seems I must salute them——Hah !

Flora. Sir, you have stolen a wedding among us here, and we come time enough, I hope, to give you joy of it.

Heart. My love ! my dear ! I am surpris'd ! Why hast thou changed thyself thus from what thou wert ?

Flora. I hope my features are not altered with my drefs.

Heart. I swear, my love, thou canst receive no addition by drefs, but what will injure the simplicity of thy charms. But, pr'ythee, tell me why have you changed your drefs ? ' Sure you must be sensible you wanted no-
' thing to make you victorious in your other habit.'

Flora.

Flora. To tell you, Sir, the truth, then ; I was obliged to change my dress ; my landlord has obliged me to it, and you know we country-folk must obey our landlords.

Heart. Well, I am satisfied.—You have obeyed him then.

Flora. Yes, Sir ; but he is a very obstinate, self-willed man ; and I think a little too barbarously insists—

Heart. Insists ! Upon what ?

Flora. Why, he insists upon my performance of the Custom of the Manor ; and therefore, in order to make me more pleasing in his eyes, commanded me to dress thus.

Heart. Custom of the Manor—Dress yourself—Commanded you to be pleasing to his eye—What is all this heap of confusion and nonsense ?

Free. Why, Sir, I'll tell you, in short ; 'tis this—The Lord of our manor has claimed by prescription, time out of mind, and still does claim, the first night's lodging of every tenant's daughter married here ; therefore our maidens, when they marry, go out of this parish, unless they are willing to pay the forfeit in kind.

Heart. What ! you are merry ; very merry ; so, go on : how !

Free. Yet when such an accident as this happened here, he generally used to take an equivalent in money or goods : but now he is resolved to be paid in kind ; he will take no modus ; and for that reason has sent for you hither, to let you know his claim.

Heart. Confound his claim—curse upon his manor, and his custom too : I'll shoot him thro' the head for having the insolence to think on't.

Free. Ay, but that is not the case ; that is not the business, my friend.

Heart. What case ! What business ! Confound your impertinence ; out with it.

Free. Why, then suppose your wife should—

Heart. Should what ? I tread upon a razor's edge—Should what ?

Free. Should like this landlord.

Heart. Like him !

64 THE COUNTRY LASSES.

Free. Ay, love him, love him to distraction, doat upon him; nay, more, be as willing to pay him down this custom in kind, as he is to receive it.

Heart. Furies! damnation! What do you mean?—[*To his wife.*] Madam, what does all this tend to?

Free. [*Aside.*] So, so: his blood circulates finely!—Faith, I begin to pity him. What a confounded hurry his spirits are in!

Flora. Why, 'tis even so, husband. This landlord I am obliged to love, obliged to it by all the ties of faith, honour, and gratitude.

Heart. Oh, very well, very well! [*Walks about in disorder.*] Tell me, thou evil spirit in an angel's form—Wherefore was I chosen out to be thus abused, ha?

Free. Because you are a man of fortune, Sir; because she hopes in a little time to break your heart, and enjoy the full third of two thousand pounds a year.

Heart. Pray, Madam, favour me—You see I bear this affair very calmly—Pray, tell me, tho' I suppose 'tis no unreasonable request—what particular obligations you have to this landlord?

Flora. Such, Sir, of such a nature—you force me to repeat them—as nothing can dissolve. I love him passionately, and I believe his affection for me is mutual; nay, I hope it will endure to the last moment of my life.

Heart. That it shall; for I'll put an end to it instantly.
[*Offers to draw, Freehold holds him.*]

Free. Hold, hold! Fie, Don Orlando! draw upon a woman. Look ye, Sir, erect your front, hold up your head, and learn to bear your fortune like a husband. I assure you, Sir, your lady has been at St. James's, she has, Sir; and she plays at piquet, ombre, basset; yes, and has her assemblies, tea-tables, visiting-days; together with a polite taste of every incidental pleasure thereunto belonging.

Heart. [*Singing.*] Tol, lol, tol!—Pray, Me'em, what's o'clock? I have been married but four hours, and I am breeding already. My wife, it seems, has antedated my commission. Get my horses ready. I'll ride post to Japan, but I'll be rid of this affair. But first I'll cut this toll-taking rascal's throat. A dog! Who shall drink his skim-milk?—In what a dream have I been? I'd give
all

‘all my estate it were one. Death ! let me see him’——
What’s his name ? Where is he ? Who is this landlord ?

Flora. Let your passion abate a little : let it ebb a while : recall your reason, and I’ll tell you—Know then, you are this landlord, Sir, the sole lord of this demesne and me : this morning I was mistress of this house, these servants, and all the dirty acres within three miles round us ; now they are yours, you are their master now.

Free. What say you, Sir ? Shall the landlord have his due, or no ?

Heart. My heart, my tongue, my eyes, my soul o’erflow with joy, what shall I do to pay this unexampled goodness ?

Flora. I was resolv’d, fully resolv’d, never to venture on a husband, till I was certainly convinc’d my person, and not my fortune, was his aim ; that proof I think you have most generously given me, and I feel myself transported with joy ; when I think I am capable of making you this grateful return.—I hope you will forgive the little deceits I have us’d to procure these assurances.

Heart. Give me thy hand, thy lips, thy heart ; there let me dwell for ever, I cannot be more happy.

Flora. I thought our jest grew a little too severe at last. It gave me pain to see him suffer so for an imaginary evil.

Free. Oh, it was a proof of his passion ; ’tis good to give nature a fillip now and then, ’tis like a race in a frosty morning, it sets the blood upon the flow most deliciously—But see your friend in bonds, Mr. Modely.

*Modely brought in, guarded by two Country Fellows,
a Constable, &c.*

Heart. What ! in captivity, George !

Const. An’ it please your worship, we have catch’d a vagrom man here, who has committed a murder as I may say, in neighbour Freehold’s Five-Acres, and so, Sir, an like you, we bring him hither to take his exhibition upon, the said burglary afore Sir Jann.

Heart. Murder’d ! Who has he murder’d ?

Const. Nea nea, I know nat.—The young fellow and he beliken ha’ had some words abouten their sweethearts, and so he shot ’em—That’s aw.

Heart. I always told you, George, what these wild ways would bring you to, but you would still run riot up on every thing; what could you expect?

Mode. Yes, faith, we have made a very pretty expedition—One of us is marry'd, and t'other may be hang'd My—comfort is, I shall be out of my pain first.

Flora. Oh, my dear, that barbarous man, it seems, has kill'd one of the prettiest youths that ever liv'd the promise of the finest gentleman.

Mode. Hah!—A very fine gentleman, truly. Hark-ye, friend, you that are so happy in your chains, don't insult—The wasps have been at those sweet-meats—The little rascal bounc'd of favours from that very virtuous lady your spouse—and therefore I kill'd him.

Heart. That does not relate to me, my dear George; her person was her own, you know, till within these few hours—Pr'ythee don't mind these things now, but turn all thy thoughts on another world—Thine kon thy past life, and tremble.

Mode. A contented one, too—Mighty good! I don't doubt, as this was a gentleman's duel, I shall have gentleman's play for my life: keep my chamber a month or two, touch cold iron, and come out as free as liberty—While you, having beat your poor wings in vain against the bar of your conjugal cage, sit sullenly moulting the remainder of your feathers, and sicken to death o' the pip.

Free. I believe I shall secure that affair; I can prove premediated malice; I can prove the challenge—and you know very well I saw you shoot him before his pistol was cock'd.

Mode. So—so—Nay, then my business is done!—Thou devil, what have I done to thee, that thou tormentest me thus?—If I could come at thee, I'd pawn my credit for one sin more, and send thee down to the father of falshood, with a lie in thy mouth.

Heart. Don't vex the poor man so.

Flora. Consider him, I beseech you, as a dying man.

Heart. True! All his time will be little enough; don't put him into a passion now.

Mode. Fools and cuckolds—Your pity is as contemptible as your scorn—Sir, Sir, why do you treat me thus?

Flora.

Flora. Shall I send for Mr. Puzzletext ? He will give you some wholesome, ghostly advice. Poor creature, how he looks !

Mode. Insulting devil !

Flora. He will shew you, in a clear light, the folly of wenching, ' and running a muck after the exorbitant desires and lusts of the flesh.'

Heart. Have you no feeling, George ? no sense of your condition ?

Mode. Faith, my friend, barbarous as thou art, I have a heart that yet relents for thee, tho' thou art thus unkind : I would not live, methinks, to see thee hen-peck'd round the parish, hunted like a craven by a pullet of thy own dunghill : No, free thyself like a man—Burn powder first, faith do ; dispatch an ounce of lead thro' thy unthinking *pia mater*, and sleep quietly once for all.

Free. He raves, poor man, he raves.

Flora. Send for the parson quickly, before his reason fails. He looks very wildly.

Heart. Ay—he may try at least to make him feel.

Free. Ah——I am afraid his conscience is very callous.

Heart. Suppose we send for a doctor and a surgeon——

Free. And breathe a vein, and purge, and shave——Where's Sir John ?——

Mode. Pox o' the parson, the doctor, the surgeon, Sir John, and all of you. What, Mr. Constable, am I to be set up here, like a shrove-tide cock, to be pelted by every clown in the hundred ?

Enter Sir John.

Sir John. Give you joy, cousin Betty, give you joy : codso, you prog very well for yourself—I did not know you went a husband-hunting all this while——Give you joy, Sir, give you joy !—What, you have stolen a fortune and did not know it ; very good, very good.

Heart. An accident only, Sir John ; I was walking in the fields, when a star shot, and took me up into its orb.

Sir John. That is nonsense—but 'tis pretty, very pretty. Come, gentlemen, what will you drink ? What will you drink ? Codso ! Where is Tim ? Where is Tim ? Odd, we will be very merry ; I am heartily glad of this affair ; every man shall buy a pair of new lungs ; we'll shut

shut ourselves up, remove the cellar into the great hall, and make one continual roar of joy that shall last a twelve-month.

Heart. Sir, here's an angry person, an acquaintance of mine, who has committed a gentleman's murder, and is in great haste for his Mittimus; pray dispatch him.

Sir John. Codso, I am sorry for it; pray let me know the case.

Enter Constable with Aura prisoner.

Const. An't it please your worship, here's another vagrom that we have taken upon disposition of his concerns in the said murder, and so having pistols in his pockets, we ha' brought him afore your worship.

Sir John. Bring him nearer; shew me his face. Codso, a pretty young fellow! let me look at him. What! how! Madam Aura, as I live! What whim, what chimeras, what adventure put thee into this habit?

Mode. Ha!—Aura!—alive too, in my little Hector's cloaths, I vow to gad—Tol, lol, dol, lol——Heark'e, my little rebroate bully—I am surprizingly rejoiced to see thee; faith I am! Buss!——Gad, I never was so much in love with thee in my life.

Aura. Will you ravish me again, Mr. Modely?—
Huh. Odd if you do, I'll swinge you.

Mode. Heartwell, how dost? Madam Flora, your must obedient—Joy, Madam, joy! Freehold, faith, thou art a very clever old gentleman.—Sir John, I rejoice to see you—I am prodigiously pleased, in troth; I was in a horrible cold sweat just now, tho' my proud heart would not own it.

Flora. Ah, if they could but frighten you into sobriety once.

Mode. I should sink into a husband; tho' faith, I find a strange stir within me about that whimsical girl there: heark'e, Madam, dare you venture upon a rake, in full assurance (as some ladies have) that your charms will reduce him?—

Aura. And so fall a martyr to my pride instead of my virtue.

Free. Hold, Sir, I have some interest here, and I don't think you tame enough yet to be marry'd——But if the girl is foolish enough to venture, why let her own inclina-

ions lead her : and then if she falls into a ditch, she can't complain of her guide.

Aura. Indeed I shall not give you that opportunity of being reveng'd.

Mode. Perhaps the punishment may be mine ; try me, trust me, since I can have you no other way.

Aura. I tell you, Sir ; you must, before I dare give credit to you, serve me faithfully at least two whole months together, and then if we like one another as well as we do now----Why, we'll settle our fortunes and our inclinations-----

Mode. And jog on in the road of our fathers.

Aura. Amen.

Mode. So be it.

Flora. I am sorry to hear your misfortune ; in our absence, it seems, the house was robbed. [To Sir John.

Sir John. Codso ! Ay, ay, a villainous story, cousin. The Duke of Gasconade lay here last night ; ay, his Grace did me the honour—But he was most barbarously treated. I am in hopes of catching 'em : if I do——

Enter Lurcher to Sir John.

Lurch. Sir, if you please, one word.

Sir John. Well, what have you to say ? I am very busy. What would you have, friend ?

Lurch. Had not you a man of quality lodg'd in your house last night ?

Sir John. Yes, I had, Sir ; and what then ? what then ?

Lurch. You have a nephew.

Sir John. Ha ! what !

Lurch. That man of quality was your nephew.

Sir John. And you are he ! Ay, 'tis so, 'tis so ; why ? I am struck dumb, ay, really, quite speechless——Why, could a man who looked so like quality, d'ye see—Well, well, 'tis an impudent, a very impudent age, and verily thou art the most impudent fellow in it—Codso, I'll have thee hanged in thy blue garter and Bristol stones for a theatrical peer as thou art.

Lurch. Please to hear me one word, Sir.

Sir John. Ay, ay,—I am your Grace's most obedient humble servant, and return you my most hearty thanks for the particular favours you have bestowed on the most unworthy of your creatures : heark ye, poltroon, did you
never

70 THE COUNTRY LASSES.

never hear of *Scandalum Magnatum*, and so forth? But what can you say for yourself now, hah?

Lurch. Sir, I say that uncommon generosity with which you treated me, under that feigned character I bore, struck so warmly upon my mind, I could not bear the compunction I felt even from my success; and thus I throw myself upon your mercy, am ready to restore all I have wrong'd you of, and only beg your forgiveness.

Sir John. This is frankly done, very generously done, indeed—In troth, the rogue touches me, he has almost brought tears into my eyes; I profess he has—What shall I do? [*Aside.*]

Lurch. Necessity drove hard—My creditors threatened me hourly with a gaol—Nature prompted me to struggle with every difficulty; if you can have a favourable thought of me—

Sir John. I profess the young knave has conquered—I profess he has—[*Turning to Lurcher.*] Well, Dick, well, if I should venture to restore you to my family, what security shall I have you won't return to these evil ways again, Dick?

Lurch. I must repeat it, it was the most pressing necessity only that reduced me to these extremes; if you can forgive me, Sir, I will endeavour hereafter to deserve it.

Sir John. I do, I do forgive thee, Dick—I profess my heart is so full it runs over at my eyes.

Lurch. Your extreme goodness covers me with confusion.

Sir John. Well, will your Grace dismiss the ragamuffins of your train, pay the rascals, and send 'em home to their wives? ' Like Falstaff's followers, they are safe by being in good company. Come, come, all is made up; let us have one trip for it now, I beseech you: what, a wedding without a fiddle, man, is like a troop without a trumpet. Codso, we will foot it till a good capermonger shall be able to copy the figure of the dance from our impressions on the pavement.

' A D A N C E.'

Heart. Let these accidents. George, hereafter, when you shall please to think, make you remember, that there is no real lasting good but in virtue, and that the greatest happiness below consists, however libertines and half-wits may affect to ridicule it, in honourable love.

When heaven conspicuous merit would regard,
A virtuous woman is the great reward :
This lovely blessing sweetens life alone,
Sooths all our ills, and keeps hard fortune down ;
Gives us an antepast of joys above,
Beauty and virtue, harmony and love.

END of the FIFTH ACT.



EPILOGUE,

Spoken by AURA in Boy's Clothes.

CRITICS, the poet's champion here I stand;

Lo ! in his name, the combat I demand ;

'Tis my opinion that his cause is good,

And I'll defend it with my heart's best blood ;

I'll push you, my bold boys, the round parade,

Cart over arm, or terse, or flanconnade.

—Codso ! these breeches have so fired my brain,

I shan't be easy till I've kill'd my man :

What ! not one beau step forth to give me battle ;

Where are those pretty things that used to tattle

Such tender nonsense ? — But they're all so civil

They hate a naked weapon ; 'tis the devil.

—Now let me die, my dear, Sir Coxcomb cries,

You want no other weapons, but your eyes.

I hate these fawning triflers, and declare

Against all smock-faced critics open war.

Know, gentlemen, the poet's my ally,

And I'll defend him to the last, or die ;

My sword is out ; I'll never basely sue,

Nor sheath it while my enemy's in view ;

No bribes, no tricks, no wheedling of my face,

Include us both i'th' treaty, if you please ;

But faith, I'll never make a separate peace.

No, ye French heroes, I'll not take your word,

You'll beat a man when you have got his sword ;

Ay, that's your play — I know ye, Sirs, of old,

You bully like the devil — with your gold ;

What must we do, then ? — Settle plenipo's,

And bravely, sword in hand, treat with our foes.

To you we fly, ye charitable fair,

To put an end to this dramatic war ;

Your smiles will cause all hostile acts to cease,

And make a lasting, honourable peace.







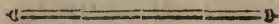
Roberts del.

Published for Bells British Theatre Jan^y 1. 1778.

Thornthwaite sc.

*M^{rs} MACKLIN in the Character of CAMILLO.
Then wonder farther Still I am his Wife.*

BELL'S EDITION.



THE
M I S T A K E.

A C O M E D Y,

As written by Sir JOHN VANBRUGH.

DISTINGUISHING ALSO THE
VARIATIONS OF THE THEATRE,

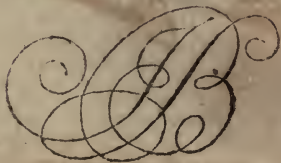
AS PERFORMED AT THE

Theatre-Royal in Dury-Lane.

Regulated from the Prompt-Book,

By PERMISSION of the MANAGERS,

By Mr. HOPKINS, Prompter.



L O N D O N :

Printed for JOHN BELL, near Exeter-Exchange, in the Strand.

MDCCLXXVIII.

P R O L O G U E.

Written by Mr. STEELE.

OUR author's wit and raillery to-night
Perhaps might please, but that your stage-delight
No more is in your minds, but ears and sight.
With audiences compos'd of belles and beaux,
The first dramatic rule is, Have good cloaths;
To charm the gay spectator's genile breast,
In lace and feather tragedy's express'd,
And heroes die unpity'd if ill-dress'd.

The other stile you full as well advance;
If 'tis a comedy you ask——Who dance?
For, Ob! what dire convulsions have of late
Torn and distracted our dramatic state,
On this great question, which house first should sell
The new French steps, imported by Ruel?
Desbarques can't rise so high we must agree,
They've half a foot in height more wit than we.
But tho' the genius of our learned age
Thinks fit to dance and sing quite off the stage
True action, comic mirth, and tragic rage,
Yet as your taste now stands, our author draws
Some hopes of your indulgence and applause.
For that great end this edifice he made,
Where humble swain at lady's feet is laid;
Where the pleas'd nymph her conquer'd lover spies,
Then to glass pillars turns her conscious eyes,
And points anew each charm for which he dies.

The muse before nor terrible nor great,
Enjoys by him this awful gilded seat;
By him theatric angels mount more high,
And mimic thunders shake a broader sky.

Thus all must own our author has done more
For your delight than ever bard before.
His thoughts are still to raise your pleasures fill'd;
To write, translate, to blazon, or to build.
Then take him in the lump, nor nicely pry
Into small faults that 'scape a busy eye;
But, kindly, Sirs, consider he, to-day,
Finds you the house, the actors, and the play;
So, tho' we stage mechanic rules omit,
You must allow it in a wholesome wit.

D R A M A T I S P E R S O N Æ.

M E N.

	<i>Drury-Lane.</i>	<i>Covent-Garden.</i>
<i>Don Alvarez</i> , father to <i>Leonora</i> ,	Mr. Bransby.	Mr. Walker.
<i>Don Felix</i> , father to <i>Lorenzo</i> ,	Mr. Burton.	Mr. Lewis.
<i>Don Carlos</i> , in love with <i>Leonora</i> ,	Mr. Garrick.	Mr. Smith.
<i>Don Lorenzo</i> , in love with <i>Leonora</i> ,	Mr. Palmer,	Mr. Mattocks.
<i>Metaphrastus</i> , tutor to <i>Camillo</i> ,	Mr. Love.	Mr. Gibson.
<i>Sancho</i> , servant to <i>Carlos</i> ,	Mr. King.	Mr. Shuter.
<i>Lopez</i> , servant to <i>Lorenzo</i> ,	Mr. Yates.	Mr. Woodward.
A Bravo,	Mr. Baddeley.	Mr. Cushing.

W O M E N.

<i>Leonora</i> , daughter to <i>Alvarez</i> ,	Mrs. Pritchard.	Mrs. Bulkley.
<i>Camillo</i> , supposed son to <i>Alvarez</i> ,	Mrs. Lee.	Miss Macklin.
<i>Isabella</i> , her friend,	Mrs. Bennet.	Mrs. Vincent.
<i>Jacinta</i> , servant to <i>Leonora</i> ,	Mrs. Clive.	Mrs. Pitt.

THE MISTAKE.

* * The lines distinguished by inverted commas, 'thus,' are omitted in the representation.

ACT I.

SCENE, *the Street.*

Enter Carlos and Sancho.

CARLOS.

I Tell thee, I am not satisfied; I'm in love enough to be suspicious of every body.

San. And yet, methinks, Sir, you should leave me out.

Car. It may be so; I can't tell; but I'm not at ease. If they don't make a knave, at least they'll make a fool of thee.

San. I don't believe a word on't. But, good faith, master, your love makes somewhat of you; I don't know what 'tis; but, methinks, when you suspect me, you don't seem a man of half those parts I used to take you for. Look in my face, 'tis round and comely, not one hollow line of a villain in it. Men of my fabric don't use to be suspected for knaves; and when you take us for fools, we never take you for wise men. For my part, in this present case, I take myself to be mighty deep. A stander-by, Sir, sees more than a gamster. You are pleased to be jealous with your poor mistress without a cause; she uses you but too well, in my humble opinion; she sees you, and talks with you, till I am quite tired on't sometimes; and your rival, that you are so scared about, forces a visit upon her about once in a fortnight.

Car. Alas! thou art ignorant in these affairs; he that's the civilly't received, is often the least cared for. Wo-

men appear warm to one, to hide a flame for another. Lorenzo, in short, appears too composed of late to be a rejected lover; and the indifference he shews upon the favours I seem to receive from her, poisons the pleasure I else should taste in them, and keeps me on a perpetual rack. No—I would fain see some of his jealous transports, have him fire at the sight o' me, contradict me whenever I speak, affront me wherever he meets me, challenge me, fight me——

San. Run you thro' the guts——

Car. But he's too calm, his heart's too much at ease, to leave me mine at rest.

San. But, Sir, you forget that there are two ways for our hearts to get at ease; when our mistresses come to be very fond of us, or we—not to care a fig for them. Now, suppose upon the rebukes you know he has had, it should chance to be the latter.

Car. Again thy ignorance appears. Alas! a lover who has broke his chain will shun the tyrant that enslaved him. Indifference never is his lot; he loves or hates for ever; and if his mistress prove another's prize, he cannot calmly see her in his arms.

San. For my part, master, I'm not so great a philosopher as you be, nor (thank my stars) so bitter a lover; but what I see, that I generally believe; and when Jacinta tells me she loves me dearly, I have good thoughts enough of my person never to doubt the truth on't. See, here the baggage comes.

Enter Jacinta with a letter.

Hist! Jacinta! my dear.

Jacin. Who's that? Blunderbuss! Where's your master?

San. Hard by.

[Shewing him.]

Jacin. Oh, Sir, I'm glad I have found you at last! I believe I have travelled five miles after you, and could neither find you at home, nor in the walks, nor at church, nor at the opera, nor——

San. Nor any where else where he was not to be found. If you had looked for him where he was, 'twas ten to one but you had met with him.

Jacin. I had, Jack-a-dandy!

Car:

THE MISTAKE.

Car. But, pr'ythee, what's the matter? Who sent you after me?

Jacin. One who's never well but when she sees you; I think 'twas my lady.

Car. Dear Jacinta, I fain would flatter myself, but am not able. The blessing's too great to be my lot. Yet 'tis not well to trifle with me; how short soe'er I am in other merit, the tenderness I have for Leonora claims something from her generosity. I should not be deluded.

Jacin. And why do you think you are? Methinks she's pretty well above-board with you. What must be done more to satisfy you?

San. Why, Lorenzo must hang himself, and then we are content.

Jacin. How! Lorenzo?

San. If less will do, he'll tell you.

Jacin. Why, you are not mad, Sir, are you? Jealous of him! Pray, which way may this have got into your head? I took you for a man of sense before. Is this your doings, log?

[To Sancho.]

San. No, forsooth, pert, I'm not much given to suspicion, as you can tell, Mrs. Forward—If I were, I might find more cause, I guess, than your mistress has given our master here. But I have so many pretty thoughts of my own person, housewife, more than I have of yours, that I stand in dread of no man.

Jacin. That's the way to prosper; however, so far I'll confess the truth to thee, at least, if that don't do, nothing else will. Men are mighty simple in love-matters, Sir. When you suspect a woman's falling off, you fall a plaguing her to bring her on again, attack her with reason and a sour face. Ud'slife, Sir, attack her with a fiddle! double your good humour, give her a ball, powder your periwig at her, let her cheat you at cards a little, and I'll warrant all's right again. But to come upon a poor woman with the gloomy face of jealousy, before she gives the least occasion for it, is to set a complaisant rival in too favourable a light. Sir, Sir, I must tell you, I have seen those have owed their success to nothing else.

Car. Say no more. I have been to blame; but there shall be no more on't.

Jacin. I should punish you but justly, however, for
what's

what's past, if I carried back what I have brought you. But I'm good natured; so, here 'tis; open it, and see how wrong you timed your jealousy. [*Gives the letter.*]

Car. [*Reads.*] "If you love me with that tenderness you have made me long believe you do, this letter will be welcome; 'tis to tell you, you have leave to plead a daughter's weakness to a father's indulgence; and if you prevail with him to lay his commands upon me, you shall be as happy as my obedience to them can make you."

LEONORA."

Then I shall be what man was never yet. [*Kissing the letter.*] Ten thousand blessings on thee for thy news. I could adore thee as a deity. [*Embracing Jacin.*]

Jacin. True flesh and blood, every inch of her, for all that.

Car. [*Reads again.*] "And if you prevail with him to lay his commands upon me, you shall be as happy as my obedience to them can make you."—Oh, happy, happy Carlos!—But what shall I say to thee, for this welcome message? [*To Jacinta.*] Alas, I want words! But let this speak for me, and this, and this, and——

[*Giving her his ring, watch, and purse.*]

San. Hold, Sir; pray, leave a little something for our board wages. You can't carry them all, I believe. [*To Jacinta.*] Shall I ease you of this?

[*Offering to take the purse.*]

Jacin. No; but you may carry—that, firrah.

[*Giving him a box o' the ear.*]

San. The jade's grown purse-proud already.

Car. Well, dear Jacinta, say something to your charming mistress, that I am not able to say myself; but, above all, excuse my late unpardonable folly, and offer her my life to expiate my crime.

Jacin. The best plea for pardon will be never to repeat the fault.

Car. If that will do, 'tis sealed for ever.

Jacin. Enough. But I must begone. Success attend you with the old gentleman. Good bye t'ye, Sir. [*Exit.*]

Car. Eternal blessings follow thee.

San. I think she has taken them all with her; the jade has got her apron full.

THE MISTAKE.

9

Car. Is not that Lorenzo coming this way ?

San. Yes, 'tis he. For my part, now, I pity the poor gentleman.

Enter Lorenzo.

Car. I'll let him see at last I can be cheerful too. [*Aside.* Your servant, Don Lorenzo——How do you do this morning ?

Lor. I thank you, Don Carlos ; perfectly well, both in body and mind.

Car. What, cured of your love then ?

Lor. No, nor I hope I never shall. May I ask you how 'tis with yours ?

Car. Increasing every hour. We are very constant both.

Lor. I find so much delight in being so, I hope I never shall be otherwise.

Car. Those joys I am well acquainted with, but should lose them soon, were I to meet a cool reception.

Lor. That's every generous lover's case, no doubt ; an angel could not fire my heart, but with an equal flame.

Car. And yet you said you still loved Leonora.

Lor. And yet I said I loved her.

Car. Does she then return you——

Lor. Every thing my passion can require.

Car. Its wants are small, I find.

Lor. Extended as the heavens.

Car. I pity you.

Lor. He must be a deity that does so.

Car. Yet I'm a mortal, and once more can pity you. Alas, Lorenzo ! 'tis a poor cordial to an aching heart, to have the tongue alone announce it happy ; besides, 'tis mean ; you should be more a man.

Lor. I find I have made you an unhappy one, so can forgive the boilings of your spleen.

Car. This seeming calmness might have the effect your vanity proposes by it, had I not a testimony of her love would (should I shew it) sink you to the centre.

Lor. Yet still I'm calm as ever.

Car. Nay, then, have at your peace. Read that, and end the farce. [*Gives him Leonora's letter.*

Lor. [*Reads.*] I have read it.

Car. And know the hand ?

Lor.

Lor. 'Tis Leonora's ; I have often seen it.

Car. I hope you then at last are satisfied.

Lor. I am. [*Smiling.*] Good-morrow, Carlos. [*Exit.*

San. Sure he's mad, master.

Car. Mad, say'st thou ?

San. And yet, by'r lady, that was a sort of a dry, sober smile at going off.

Car. A very sober one ! Had he shewn me such a letter, I had put on another countenance.

San. Ay, o' my conscience, had you.

Car. Here's mystery in this. I like it not.

San. I see his man and confident there, Lopez. Shall I draw him on a Scotch pair of boots, master, and make him tell all ?

Car. Some questions I must ask him ; call him hither.

San. Hem ! Lopez, hem !

Enter Lopez.

Lop. Who calls ?

San. I and my master.

Lop. I can't stay.

San. You can indeed, Sir.

[*Laying hold on him.*

Car. Whither in such haste, honest Lopez ? What, upon some love-errand ?

Lop. Sir, your servant ; I ask your pardon ; but I was going——

Car. I guess where ; but you need not be so shy of me any more ; thy master and I are no longer rivals ; I have yielded up the cause ; the lady will have it so, so I submit.

Lop. Is it possible, Sir ? Shall I then live to see my master and you friends again ?

San. Yes, and what's better, thou and I shall be friends too. There will be no more fear of Christian bloodshed. I give thee up Jacinta ; she's a slippery housewife ; so master and I are going to match ourselves elsewhere.

Lop. But is it possible, Sir, your honour should be in earnest ? I'm afraid you are pleased to be merry with your poor humble servant.

Car. I'm not at present much disposed to mirth ; my indifference in this matter is not so thoroughly formed ; but my reason has so far mastered my passion, to shew me

'tis

'tis in vain to pursue a woman whose heart already is another's. 'Tis what I have so plainly seen of late, I have roused my resolution to my aid, and broke my chains for ever.

Lop. Well, Sir, to be plain with you, this is the joy-fullest news I have heard this long time; for I always knew you to be a mighty honest gentleman: and, good faith, it often went to the heart o' me, to see you so abused. Dear, dear, have I often said to myself (when they have had a private meeting just after you have been gone)——

Car. Ha!

San. Hold, master, don't kill him yet. [*Aside to Car.*

Lop. I say, I have said to myself, what wicked things are women, and what pity it is they should be suffered in a Christian country! what a shame they should be allowed to play Will-in-the-wisp with men of honour, and lead them through thorns and briars and rocks and rugged ways, till their hearts are torn in pieces, like an old coat in a fox-chase! I say, I have said to myself——

Ca. Thou hast said enough to thyself, but say a little more to me. Where were these secret meetings thou talkest of?

Lop. In sundry places, and by divers ways; sometimes in the cellar, sometimes in the garret, sometimes in the court, sometimes in the gutter; but the place where the kifs of kisses was given was——

Car. In hell.

Lop. Sir!

Car. Speak, fury! what dost thou mean by the kifs of kisses?

Lop. The kifs of peace, Sir, the kifs of union, the kifs of consummation.

Car. Thou liest, villain!

Lop. I don't know but I may, Sir——What the devil's the matter now? [*Aside.*

Car. There's not one word of truth in all thy cursed tongue has uttered.

Lop. No, Sir—I—I—believe there is not.

Car. Why then didst thou say it, wretch?

Lop. Oh!——only in jest, Sir.

Car. I am not in a jesting condition.

Lop.

Lop. Nor I——at present, Sir.

Car. Speak then the truth, as thou wouldst do it at the hour of death.

Lop. Yes, at the gallows, and be turned off as soon as I've done. *[Aside.]*

Car. What's that you murmur?

Lop. Nothing but a short prayer.

Car. I am distracted, and fright the wretch from telling me what I am upon the rack to know. *[Aside.]* Forgive me, Lopez; I am to blame to speak thus harshly to thee. Let this obtain my pardon. *[Giving him money.]* Thou seest I am disturbed.

Lop. Yes, Sir, I see I have been led into a snare; I have said too much.

Car. And yet thou must say more; nothing can lessen my torment but a farther knowledge of what causes my misery. Speak then, have I any thing to hope?

Lop. Nothing, but that you may be a happier bachelor, than my master may probably be a married man.

Car. Married, say'st thou?

Lop. I did, Sir, and I believe he'll say so too in a twelvemonth.

Car. Oh, torment!—But give me more on't; when, how, to whom, where?

Lop. Yesterday, to Leonora, by the parson, in the pantry.

Car. Look to't, if this be false, thy life shall pay the torment thou hast given me. Begone!

Lop. With the body and the soul o' me. *[Exit.]*

San. Base news, master.

Car. Now my insulting rival's smile speaks out. Oh, cursed, cursed woman!

Enter Jacinta.

Jacin. I'm come in haste to tell you, Sir, that as soon as the moon's up, my lady will give you a meeting in the close walk by the back-door of the garden; she thinks she has something to propose to you will certainly get her father's consent to marry you.

Car. Past sufferance! this aggravation is not to be borne. Go, thank her—with my curses—Fly—and let them blast her while their venom's strong. *[Exit.]*

Jacin. Won't thou explain? What's this storm for?

San.

San. And dar'st thou ask me questions, smooth-fac'd iniquity, crocodile of Nile, syren of the rocks? Go, carry back the too gentle answer thou hast received; only let me add with the poet:

We are no fools, trollop, my master nor me;
And thy mistress may go—to the devil with thee.

[*Exit* Sancho.

Jacin. Am I awake?—I fancy not. A very idle dream this. Well, I'll go talk in my sleep to my lady about it; and when I awake, we'll try what interpretation we can make on't.

[*Exit.*

END of the FIRST ACT.

A C T II.

Enter Camillo and Isabella.

ISABELLA.

HOW can you doubt my secrecy? Have you not proofs of it?

Cam. Nay, I am determined to trust you. But are we safe here? Can nobody overhear us?

Isab. 'Safer much than in a room.' Nobody can come within hearing, before we see them.

Cam. And yet how hard 'tis for me to break silence!

Isab. Your secret, sure, must be of great importance.

Cam. You may be sure it is, when I confess 'tis with regret I own it e'en to you; and were it possible, you should not know it.

Isab. 'Tis frankly own'd, indeed; but 'tis not kind, perhaps not prudent, after what you know I already am acquainted with. Have I not been bred up with you? And am I ignorant of a secret, which, were it known—

Cam. Would be my ruin—I confess it would. I own you know why both my birth and sex are thus disguised; you know how I was taken from my cradle to secure the estate, which had else been lost by young Camillo's death; 'but which is now safe in my supposed father's hands, 'by my passing for his son; and 'tis because you know 'all this, I have resolved to open farther wonders to you.' But before I say any more; you must resolve one doubt, which often gives me great disturbance; whether Don

B

Alvarez

Alvarez ever was himself privy to the mystery which has disguised my sex, and made me pass for his son?

Ifab. What you ask me, is a thing has often perplexed my thoughts, as well as yours, nor could my mother ever resolve the doubt. You know when that young child Camillo died, in whom was wrapped up so much expectation, from the great estate his uncle's will (even before he came into the world) had left him; his mother made a secret of his death to her husband Alvarez, and readily fell in with a proposal made her, to take you (who then was just Camillo's age) and bring you up in his room. You have heard how you were then at nurse with my mother, and how your own was privy and consenting to the plot; but Don Alvarez was never let into it by 'em.

Cam. Don't you then think it probable his wife might after tell him?

Ifab. 'Twas ever thought, nothing but a death-bed repentance could draw it from her to any one, and that was prevented by the suddenness of her exit to t'other world, 'which did not give her even time to call heaven's mercy on her. And yet, now I have said all this, I own the correspondence and friendship I observe he holds with your real mother, gives me some suspicion, and the presents he often makes her (which people seldom do for nothing) confirm it. But since this is all I can say to you on that point, pray let us come to the secret, which you have made me impatient to hear.

Cam. Know then, that though Cupid is blind, he is not to be deceived: 'I can hide my sex from the world, but not from him;' his dart has found the way through the manly garb I wear, to pierce a virgin's tender heart. I love ———

Ifab. How!

Cam. Nay, ben't surprized at that, I have other wonders for you.

Ifab. Quick, let me hear 'em.

Cam. I love Lorenzo.

Ifab. Lorenzo! Most nicely hit. The very man from whom your imposture keeps this vast estate; and who, on the first knowledge of your being a woman, would enter into possession of it. This is indeed a wonder.

Cam. Then wonder farther still, I am his wife.

Ifab. Ha ! His wife !

Cam. His wife, Isabella ; and yet thou hast not all my wonders, I am his wife without his knowledge ; he does not even know I am a woman.

Ifab. Madam, your humble servant ; if you please to go on, I won't interrupt you, indeed I won't.

Cam. Then hear how these strange things have past : Lorenzo, bound unregarded in my sister's chains, seemed in my eyes a conquest worth her care. Nor could I see him treated with contempt, without growing warm in his interest : I blamed Leonora for not being touched with his merit ; I blamed her so long, till I grew touched with it myself : and the reasons I urged to vanquish her heart, insensibly made a conquest of my own : ' 'twas thus, my friend, I fell. What was next to be done my passion pointed out : my heart I felt was warmed to a noble enterprize ; I gave it way, and boldly on it led me.' Leonora's name and voice, in the dark shades of night, I borrowed, to engage the object of my wishes. ' I met him, Isabella, and so deceived him ; he cannot blame me, sure, for much I blest him. But to finish this strange story : In short, I own, I long had loved ; but finding my father most averse to my desires, I at last had forced myself to this secret correspondence ; I urged the mischiefs would attend the knowledge on't, I urged them so, he thought them full of weight, so yielded to observe what rules I gave him : they were to pass the day with cold indifference, to avoid even signs or looks of intimacy, but gather for the still, the secret night, a flood of love to recompense the losses of the day.' I will not trouble you with lovers cares, nor what contrivances we formed to bring this toying to a solid bliss.' Know only, when three nights we thus had passed, the fourth it was agreed should make us one for ever ; each kept their promise, and last night has joined us.

Ifab. Indeed your talents pass my poor extent ; you serious ladies are well formed for business ; what wretched work a poor coquet had made on't ; but still there's that remains will try your skill ; you have your man, but——

Cam. Lovers think no farther, the object of that passion possesses all desire; 'however I have opened to you my wondrous situation. If you can advise me in my difficulties to come, you will.' But see—My husband!

Enter Lorenzo.

Lor. You look as if you were busy; pray tell me, if I interrupt you, I'll retire.

Cam. No, no, you have a right to interrupt us, since you were the subject of our discourse.

Lor. Was I?

Cam. You were; nay, I'll tell you how you entertained us, too.

Lor. Perhaps I had as good avoid hearing that.

Cam. You need not fear, it was not to your disadvantage; I was commending you, and saying, if I had been a woman, I had been in danger; nay, I think I said I should infallibly have been in love with you.

Lor. While such an If is in the way, you run no great-risque in declaring: but you'd be finely catched now, should some wonderful transformation give me a claim to your heart.

Cam. Not sorry for't at all; for I ne'er expect to find a mistress please me half so well as you would do if I were yours.

Lor. Since you are so well inclined to me in your wishes, Sir, I suppose (as the fates have ordained it) you would have some pleasure in helping me to a mistress, since you can't be mine yourself.

Cam. Indeed I should not.

Lor. Then my obligation is but small to you.

Cam. Why, would you have a woman, that is in love with you herself employ her interest to help you to another?

Lor. No, but you being no woman might.

Cam. Sir, 'tis as a woman I say what I do, and I suppose myself a woman when I design all these favours to you: therefore out of that supposition, I have no other good intentions to you than you may expect from any one that says, he's—Sir, your humble servant.

Lor. So unless heaven is pleased to work a miracle, and from a sturdy young fellow, make you a kind-hearted

ed young lady, I'm to get little by your good opinion of me.

Cam. Yes; there is one means yet left (on this side a miracle) that would perhaps engage me, if with an honest oath you could declare, were I a woman, I might dispute your heart, even with the first of my pretending sex.

Lor. Then solemnly and honestly I swear, that had you been a woman, and I the master of the world, I think I should have laid it at your feet.

Cam. Then honestly and solemnly I swear, henceforward all your interest shall be mine.

Lor. I have a secret to impart to you will quickly try your friendship.

Cam. I have a secret to unfold to you, will put you even to a fiery trial.

Lor. What do you mean, Camillo?

Cam. I mean that I love, where I never durst yet own it, yet where 'tis in your power to make me the happiest of——

Lor. Explain, Camillo; and be assured, if your happiness is in my power, 'tis in your own.

Cam. Alas! you promise me you know not what.

Lor. I promise nothing but what I will perform; name the person.

Cam. 'Tis one who is very near to you.

Lor. If 'tis my sister, why all this pain in bringing forth the secret?

Cam. Alas! it is your——

Lor. Speak!

Cam. I cannot yet; farewell.

Lor. Hold! Pray speak it now.

Cam. I must not: but when you tell me your secret, you shall know mine.

Lor. Mine is not in my power, without the consent of another.

Cam. Get that consent, and then we'll try who best will keep their oaths.

Lor. I am content.

Cam. And I. Adieu.

Lor. Farewel.

[Exit Lorenzo.

Enter

Enter Leonora and Jacinta.

Leo. 'Tis enough : I will revenge myself this way : if it does but torment him, I shall be content to find no other pleasure in it. Brother, you'll wonder at my change, after all my ill usage of Lorenzo, I am determined to be his wife.

Cam. How, sister ! so sudden a turn ! This inequality of temper indeed is not commendable.

Leo. Your change, brother, is much more justly surprising ; you hitherto have pleaded for him strongly, accused me of blindness, cruelty and pride ; and now I yield to your reasons, and resolve in his favour, you blame my compliance, and appear against his interest.

Cam. I quit his service for what's dearer to me, yours : I have learned from sure intelligence, the attack he made on you was but a feint, and that his heart is in another's chain ; I would not therefore see you so exposed, to offer up yourself to one who must refuse you.

Leo. If that be all, leave me my honour to take care of ; I am no stranger to his wishes ; he won't refuse me, brother, nor, I hope, will you, to tell him of my resolution : If you do, this moment with my own tongue (through all a virgin's blushes) I'll own to him I am determined in his favour—You paused as if you'd let the task lie on me.

Cam. Neither on you, nor me ; I have a reason you are yet a stranger to : know then, there is a virgin, young and tender, whose peace and happiness so much are mine, I cannot see her miserable ; she loves him with that torrent of desire, that, were the world resigned her in his stead, she'd still be wretched. I will not pique you to a female strife, by saying you have not charms to tear him from her ; but I would move you to a female softness, by telling you her death would wait your conquest, What I have more to plead is as a brother ; I hope that gives me some small interest in you ? Whatever it is, you see how I'd employ it.

Leo. ' You ne'er could put it to a harder service.' I beg a little time to think : pray leave me to myself awhile.

Cam. I shall ; I only ask that you would think, and then you won't refuse me.

[*Exit Cam*
Jacin.

Jacin. Indeed, Madam, I am of your brother's mind, though for another cause; but sure 'tis worth twice thinking on for your own sake: you are too violent.

Leo. A slighted woman knows no bounds. Vengeance is all the cordial she can have, so snatches at the nearest. Ungrateful wretch! to use me with such insolence.

Jacin. You see me as much enraged at it as you are yourself, yet my brain is roving after the cause, for something there must be; never letter was received by man with more passion and transport; I was almost as charming a goddess as yourself, only for bringing it. Yet, when in a moment after I came with a message worth a dozen on't, never was witch so handled: something must have passed between one and t'other, that's sure.

Leo. Nothing could pass worth my enquiring after, since nothing could happen that can excuse his usage of me; he had a letter under my hand which owned him master of my heart; and till I contradicted it with my mouth, he ought not to doubt the truth on't.

Jacin. Nay, I confess, Madam, I han't a word to say for him. I'm afraid he's but a rogue at bottom, as well as my Shameless that attends him; we are bit, by my troth, and haply well enough served, for listening to the glib-tongues of the rascals; but be comforted, Madam; they'll fall into the hands of some foul sluts or other, before they die, that will set our account even with 'em.

Leo. Well, let him laugh; let him glory in what he has done: he shall see I have a spirit can use him as I ought.

Jacin. And let one thing be your comfort, by the way, Madam, that in spite of all your dear affections to him, you have had the grace to keep him at arm's end. You han't thanked me for't; but good faith 'twas well I did not stir out of the chamber that fond night. For there are times the stoutest of us are in danger, the rascals wheedle so.

Leo. In short my very soul is fired with this treatment; and if ever that perfidious monster should relent, though he would crawl like a poor worm beneath my feet, nay, plunge a dagger in his heart, to bleed for pardon: I charge thee strictly, charge thee on thy life, thou do not
urge

urge a look to melt me toward him, but strongly buoy me up in brave resentment; and if thou see'st (which heaven avert) a glance of weakness in me, rouse to my memory the vile wrongs I've borne, and blazon 'em with skill in all their glaring colours.

Jacin. Madam, never doubt me; I am charged to the mouth with fury, and if ever I meet that fat traitor of mine, such a volley will I pour about his ears — Now heaven prevent all hasty vows; but in the humour I am, methinks I'd carry my maidenhead to my cold grave with me before I'd let it smirch at the rascal. But soft; here comes your father.

Enter Alvarez.

Alv. Leonora, I'd have you retire a little, and send your brother's tutor to me, Metaphrastus.

[Exeunt Leonora and Jacinta.]

I'll try if I can discover by his tutor, what it is that seems so much to work his brain of late; for something more than common there plainly does appear, yet nothing that can disturb his soul, like what I have to torture mine on his account. 'Sure nothing in this world is worth a troubled mind: what racks has avarice stretched me on! I wanted nothing; kind heaven hath given me a plentiful lot, and seated me in great abundance.' Why then approve I of this imposture? What have I gained by it? Wealth and misery. I have bartered peaceful days for restless nights; a wretched bargain! and he that merchandizes thus, must be undone at last.

Enter Metaphrastus.

Metaph. *Mandatum tuum curo diligenter.*

Alv. Master, I had a mind to ask you —

Metaph. The title, master, comes from *Magis* and *Ter*, which is as much as to say, *thrice worthy*.

Alv. I never heard so much before, but it may be true for aught I know: but master —

Metaph. Go on.

Alv. Why so I will if you'll let me; but don't interrupt me, then.

Metaph. Enough, proceed.

Alv. Why then, Master, for the third time, my son Camillo gives me much uneasiness of late; you know I love him, and have many careful thoughts about him.

Metaph:

Metaph. 'Tis true, *Filio, non potest præferri, nisi fili-*
us—

Alv. Master, when one has business to talk on, these scholastic expressions are not of use; I believe you a great Latinist; possibly you may understand Greek; those who recommended you to me, said so, and I am willing it should be true: but the thing I want to discourse you about at present, does not properly give you an occasion to display your learning. Besides, to tell you truth, 'twill at all times be lost upon me; my father was a wise man, but he taught me nothing beyond common sense; I know but one tongue in the world, which luckily being understood by you as well as me, I fancy whatever thoughts we have to communicate to one another, may reasonably be conveyed in that, without having recourse to the language of Julius Cæsar.

Metaph. You are wrong, but may proceed.

Alv. I thank you: what is the matter I do not know, but though it is of the utmost consequence to me to marry my son, what match soever I propose to him, he still finds some pretence or other to decline it.

Metaph. He is perhaps of the humour of a brother of Marcius Tullius, who—

Alv. Dear Master, leave the Greeks and the Latins, and the Scotch and the Welch, and let me go on in my business; what have those people to do with my son's marriage?

Metaph. Again you are wrong; but go on.

Alv. I say then, that I have strong apprehensions, from his refusing all my proposals, that he may have some secret inclination of his own; and to confirm me in this fear, I yesterday observed him (without his knowing it) in a corner of the grove, where nobody comes—

Metaph. A place out of the way, you would say; a place of retreat.

Alv. Why, the corner of a grove, where nobody comes, is a place of retreat, is it not?

Metaph. In Latin, *Secessus*.

Alv. Ha!

Metaph. As Virgil has it, *Est in secessu locus*.

Alv. How could Virgil have it, when I tell you no soul was there but he and I.

Metaph.

Metaph. Virgil is a famous author ; I quote his saying as a phrase more proper to the occasion than that you use, and not as one who was in the wood with you.

Alv. And I tell you, I hope to be as famous as any Virgil of 'em all, when I have been dead as long, and have no need of a better phrase than my own to tell you my meaning.

Metaph. You ought, however, to make choice of the words most used by the best authors. *Tu vivendo bonos, as they say, scribendo sequere peritos.*

Alv. Again!

Metaph. 'Tis Quintilian's own precept.

Alv. Oons——

Metaph. And he has something very learned upon it, that may be of service to you to hear.

Alv. You son of a whore, will you hear me speak?

Metaph. What may be the occasion of this unmanly passion? What is it you would have with me?

Alv. What you might have known an hour ago, if you had pleased.

Metaph. You would then have me hold my peace—I shall.

Alv. You will do very well.

Metaph. You see I do; well, go on.

Alv. Why then, to begin once again, I say my son Camillo——

Metaph. Proceed; I shan't interrupt you.

Alv. I say, my son Camillo——

Metaph. What is it you say of your son Camillo?

Alv. That he has got a dog of a tutor, whose brains I'll beat out, if he won't hear me speak.

Metaph. That dog is a philosopher, contemns passion, and yet will hear you.

Alv. I don't believe a word on't, but I'll try once again; I have a mind to know from you, whether you have observed any thing in my son——

Metaph. Nothing that is like his father. Go on.

Alv. Have a care.

Metaph. I do not interrupt you; but you are long in coming to a conclusion.

Alv. Why, thou hast not let me begin yet.

Metaph. And yet 'tis high time to have made an end.

Alv

Alv. Dost thou know thy danger? I have not—thus much patience left. [*Shewing the end of his finger.*]

Metaph. Mine is already consumed. I do not use to be thus treated; my profession is to teach and not to hear, yet I have hearkened like a school-boy, and am not heard although a master.

Alv. Get out of the room.

Metaph. I will not. If the mouth of a wise man be shut, he is, as it were, a fool; for who shall know his understanding? Therefore a certain philosopher said well, Speak, that thou may'st be known; great talkers, without knowledge, are as the winds that whistle: but they who have learning, should speak aloud. If this be not permitted, we may expect to see the whole order of nature o'erthrown; hens devour foxes, and lambs destroy wolves; nurses suck children, and children give suck; generals mend stockings, and chambermaids take towns; we may expect, I say——

Alv. That, and that, and that, and——

[*Strikes him, and kicks him, and then follows him off with a bell at his ear.*]

Metaph. O Tempora! O mores!

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE, the Street.

Enter Lopez.

LOPEZ.

Sometimes Fortune seconds a bold design, and when Folly has brought us into a trap, Impudence brings us out on't. I have been caught by this hot-headed lover here; and have been told, like a puppy, what I shall be beaten for like a dog. Come, courage, my dear Lopez; fire will fetch out fire. Thou hast told one body thy master's secret, e'en tell it to half a dozen more, and try how that will thrive. Go, tell it to the two old Dons, the lovers' fathers. The thing's done, and can't be retrieved.

trieved. Perhaps they'll lay their two ancient heads together, club a pennyworth of wisdom a-piece, and, with great penetration, at last find out that 'tis best to submit, where 'tis not in their power to do otherwise. This being resolved, there's no time to be lost.

[Knocks at Alvarez's door.

Alv. Who knocks ?

[Within.

Lop. Lopez.

Alv. What dost want ?

[Looking out.

Lop. To bid you good-morrow, Sir.

Alv. Well, good-morrow to thee again.

[Retires.

Lop. What a—— I think he does not care for my company.

[Knocks again.

Alv. Who knocks ?

Lop. Lopez.

Alv. What wouldst have ?

[Looks out.

Lop. My old master, Sir, gives his service to you, and desires to know how you do.

Alv. How I do ! Why well. How should I do ? Service to him again.

[Retires.

Lop. Sir.

Alv. [returning.] What the deuce wouldst thou have with me, with thy good-morrows and thy services ?

Lop. This man does not understand good-breeding, I find. [Aside.] Why, Sir, my master has some very earnest business with you.

Alv. Business ! About what ? What business can he have with me ?

Lop. I don't know, truly ; but 'tis some very important matter : he has just now, as I hear, discovered some great secret, which he must needs talk with you about.

Alv. Ha ! a secret, say'st thou ?

Lop. Yes ; and bid me bring him word, if you were at home, he'd be with you presently. Sir, your humble servant.

[Exit Lopez.

Alv. A secret, and must speak with me about it ! Heavens, how I tremble ! What can this message mean ? I have very little acquaintance with him ; what business can he have with me ? An important secret 'twas, he said, and that he had just discovered it. Alas ! I have in the world but one ; if it be that—I'm lost ; an eternal blot must fix upon me. How unfortunate am I, that I have

have not followed the honest counsels of my heart, which have often urged me to set my conscience at ease, by rendering to him the estate which is his due, and which, by a foul imposture, I keep from him. But 'tis now too late, my villainy is out, and I shall not only be forced, with shame, to restore him what is his, but shall be perhaps condemned to make him reparation with my own. Oh, terrible view!

Enter Don Felix.

Don Fel. My son to go and marry her, without her father's knowledge? This can never end well. I don't know what to do. He'll conclude I was privy to it, and his power and interest are so great at court, he may with ease contrive my ruin. I tremble at his sending to speak with me——Mercy on me! there he is. [*Aside.*]

Alv. Ah! shield me, kind heaven! There's Don Felix come. How I am struck with the sight of him! Oh, the torment of a guilty mind! [*Aside.*]

Don Fel. What shall I say to soften him? [*Aside.*]

Alv. How shall I look him in the face? [*Aside.*]

Don Fel. 'Tis impossible he can forgive it. [*Aside.*]

Alv. He'll certainly expose me to the whole world. [*Aside.*]

Don Fel. I see his countenance change. [*Aside.*]

Alv. With what contempt he looks upon me! [*Aside.*]

Don. Fel. I see, Don Alvarez, by the disorder of your face, you are but too well informed of what brings me here.

Alv. 'Tis true.

Don Fel. The news may well surprize you; 'tis what I have been far from apprehending.

Alv. Wrong, very wrong, indeed.

Don. Fel. The action is certainly, to the last point, to be condemned, and I think nobody should pretend to excuse the guilty.

Alv. They are not to be excused, though heaven may have mercy.

Don Fel. That's what I hope you will consider.

Alv. We should act as Christians.

Don. Fel. Most certainly.

Alv. Let mercy then prevail.

Don. Fel. It is indeed of heavenly birth.

Alv. Generous Don Felix !

Don Fel. Too indulgent Alvarez !

Alv. I thank you on my knee.

Don Fel. 'Tis I ought to have been there first.

[*They kneel.*]

Alv. Is it possible we are friends ?

Don Fel. Embrace me to confirm it. [*They embrace.*]

Alv. Thou best of men !

Don Fel. Unlook'd-for bounty !

Alv. Did you know the torment [*Rising.*] this unhappy action has given me——

Don Fel. 'Tis impossible it could do otherwise ; nor has my trouble been less.

Alv. But let my misfortune be kept secret.

Don Fel. Most willingly. My advantage is sufficient by it, without the vanity of making it public to the world.

Alv. Incomparable goodness ! That I should thus have wronged a man so worthy ! [*Aside.*] My honour then is safe ?

Don Fel. For ever, even for ever let it be a secret, I am content.

Alv. Noble gentleman ! [*Aside.*] As to what advantages ought to accrue to you by it, it shall be all to your entire satisfaction.

Don Fel. Wonderful bounty ! [*Aside.*] As to that, Don Alvarez, I leave it entirely to you, and shall be content with whatever you think reasonable.

Alv. I thank you, from my soul I must ; you know I must.—This must be an angel, not a man. [*Aside.*]

Don Fel. The thanks lie on my side, Alvarez, for this unexpected generosity ; but may all faults be forgot, and heaven ever prosper you.

Alv. The same prayer I, with a double fervour, offer up for you.

Don Fel. Let us then once more embrace, and be forgiveness sealed for ever.

Alv. Agreed ; thou best of men, agreed.

[*They embrace.*]

Don Fel. This thing then being thus happily terminated, let me own to you, Don Alvarez, I was in extreme apprehensions of your utmost resentment on this occasion ;

occasion ; for I could not doubt but you had formed more happy views in the disposal of so fair a daughter as Leonora, than my poor son's inferior fortune e'er can answer ; but since they are joined, and that—

Alv. Ha !

Don Fel. Nay, 'tis very likely to discourse of it may not be very pleasing to you, tho' your christianity and natural goodness have prevail'd on you so generously to forgive it. But to do justice to Leonora, and screen her from your too harsh opinion in this unlucky action, 'twas that cunning wicked creature that attends her, who, by unusual arts, wrought her to this breach of duty, for her own inclinations were disposed to all the modesty and resignation a father could ask from a daughter ; my son I can't excuse, but since your bounty does so, I hope you'll quite forget the fault of the less guilty Leonora.

Alv. What a mistake have I lain under here ! And from a groundless apprehension of one misfortune, find myself in the certainty of another. [*Aside.*]

Don Fel. He looks disturb'd ; what can this mean ?

[*Aside.*]

Alv. My daughter married to his son ! Confusion ! But I find myself in such unruly agitation, something wrong may happen if I continue with him ; I'll therefore leave him. [*Aside.*]

Don Fel. You seem thoughtful, Sir ; I hope there's no—

Alv. A sudden disorder I am seized with ; you'll pardon me, I must retire. [*Exit.*]

Don Fel. I don't like this—He went oddly off—I doubt he finds this bounty difficult to go through with. His natural resentment is making an attack upon his acquired generosity. Pray Heaven it ben't too strong for it. 'The misfortune is a great one, and can't but touch him nearly. It was not natural to be so calm : I wish it don't yet drive him to be my ruin.' But here comes this young hot-brained coxcomb, who, with his midnight amours, has been the cause of all this mischief to me.

Enter Lorenzo.

So, Sir, are you come to receive my thanks for your noble exploit ? You think you have done bravely now,

ungracious offspring, to bring perpetual trouble on me. Must there never pass a day, but I must drink some bitter potion or other of your preparation for me?

Lor. I am amazed, Sir! Pray what have I done to deserve your anger?

Dou Fel. Nothing; no manner of thing in the world; nor never do. I am an old testy fellow, and am always scolding, and finding fault for nothing; complaining that I have got a coxcomb of a son that makes me weary of my life, fancying he perverts the order of nature, turning day into night and night into day; getting whims in my brain, that he consumes his life in idleness, unless he rouses now and then to do some noble stroke of mischief; and having an impertinent dream at this time, that he has been making the fortune of the family, by an underhand marriage with the daughter of a man who will crush us all to powder for it. Ah, ungracious wretch! to bring an old man into all this trouble. The pain thou gavest thy mother to bring thee into the world, and the plague thou hast given me to keep thee here, make the getting thee (tho' 'twas in our honeymoon) a bitter remembrance to us both. [*Exit.*]

Lor. So——all's out——Here's a noble storm arising, and I'm at sea in a cock-boat. But which way could this business reach him? By this traitor Lopez—It must be so, it could be no other way! for only he, and the priest that married us, know of it. The villain will never confess, tho'. I must try a little address with him, and conceal my anger. Oh! here he comes.

Enter Lopez.

Lor. Lopez.

Lop. Do you call, Sir?

Lor. I find all's discovered to my father; the secret's out; he knows my marriage.

Lop. He knows your marriage! How the pest should that happen, Sir? 'Tis impossible, that's all.

Lor. I tell thee, 'tis true; he knows every particular of it.

Lop. He does! Why then, Sir, all I can say is, that Satan and he are better acquainted than the devil and a good christian ought to be.

Lor.

Lor. Which way he has discovered it I can't tell, nor am I much concerned to know, since, beyond all my expectations, I find him perfectly easy at it, and ready to excuse my fault with better reasons than I can find to do it myself.

Lop. Say you so ! I am very glad to hear that : then all's safe. [*Aside.*]

Lor. 'Tis unexpected good fortune ; but it could never proceed purely from his own temper ; there must have been pains taken with him to bring him to this calm : I'm sure I owe much to the bounty of some friend or other ; I wish I knew where my obligation lay, that I might acknowledge it as I ought.

Lop. Are you thereabouts, i'faith ? Then sharp's the word ; I'gad I'll own the thing, and receive his bounty for it. [*Aside.*] Why, Sir—not that I pretend to make a merit of the matter, for, alas ! I am but your poor hireling, and therefore bound in duty to render you all the service I can—but—'tis I have done it.

Lor. What hast thou done ?

Lop. What no man else could have done ; the job, Sir ; told him the secret, and then talked him into a liking on't.

Lor. 'Tis impossible ; thou dost not tell me true.

Lop. Sir, I scorn to reap any thing from another man's labours ; but if this poor piece of service carries any merit with it, you now know where to reward it.

Lor. Thou art not serious.

Lop. I am ; or may hunger be my mess-mate.

Lor. And may famine be mine, if I don't reward thee for it, as thou deservest—Dead—

[*Making a pass at him.*]

Lop. H. ve a care there. [*Leaping on one side.*] What do you mean, Sir ? I bar all surprise.

Lor. Traitor, is this the fruit of the trust I placed in thee ? Villain ! [*Making another thrust at him.*]

Lop. Take heed, Sir ; you'll do one a mischief before y'are aware.

Lor. What recompence can'st thou make me, wretch,

for this piece of treachery? Thy sordid blood can't expiate the thousandth—But I'll have it, however.

[*Thrusts again.*]

Lop. Look you there again. Pray, Sir, be quiet. Is the devil in you? 'Tis bad jesting with edged tools. I'gad that last push was within an inch of me. I don't know what you make all this bustle about, but I'm sure I've done all for the best, and I believe 'twill prove for the best too at last, if you'll have but a little patience. But if gentlemen will be in their airs in a moment—Why, what the deuce—I'm sure I have been as eloquent as Cicero in your behalf; and I don't doubt, to good purpose too, if you'll give things time to work. But nothing but foul language, and naked swords about the house; sa, sa; run you through, you dog: why nobody can do business at this rate.

Lor. And suppose your project fail, and I am ruined by it, Sir.

Lop. Why, 'twill be time enough to kill me then, Sir, won't it? What should you do it for now? Besides, I an't ready, I'm not prepared, I might be undone by't.

Lor. But what will Leonora say to her marriage being known, wretch?

Lop. Why, may be she'll draw—her sword too. [*Shewing his tongue.*] But all shall be well with you both, if you will but let me alone.

Lor. Peace; here's her father.

Lop. That's well: we shall see how things go presently.

Enter Don Alvarez.

Alv. The more I recover from the disorder this discourse has put me in, the more strange the whole adventure appears to me. Leonora maintains there is not a word of truth in what I have heard; that she knows nothing of marriage: and indeed she tells me this with such a naked air of sincerity, that for my part I believe her. What then must be their project? Some villainous intention, to be sure; tho' which way, I yet am ignorant. But here's the bridegroom; I'll accost him.—I am told, Sir, you take upon you to scandalize my daughter, and tell idle tales of what can never happen.

Lop.

Lop. Now, methinks, Sir, if you treated your son-in-law with a little more civility, things might go just as well in the main.

Alv. What means this insolent fellow by my son-in-law? I suppose 'tis you, villain, are the author of this impudent story.

Lop. You seem angry, Sir—perhaps without cause.

Alv. Cause, traitor! Is a cause wanting where a daughter's defamed, and a noble family scandalized?

Lop. There he is, let him answer you.

Alv. I should be glad he'd answer me. Why, if he had any desires to my daughter, did he not make his approaches like a man of honour?

Lop. Yes; and so have had the doors bolted against him, like a house-breaker. *[Aside.]*

Lor. Sir, to justify my proceedings, I have little to say; but to excuse it, I have much; if any allowance may be made to a passion, which in your youth you have yourself been swayed by; I love your daughter to that excess—

Alv. You would undo her for a night's lodging.

Lor. Undo her, Sir!

Alv. Yes, that's the word; you knew it was against her interest to marry you, therefore you endeavoured to win her to it in private; you knew her friends would make a better bargain for her, therefore you kept your designs from their knowledge; and yet you love her to that excess—

Lor. I'd readily lay down my life to serve her.

Alv. Could you readily lay down fifty thousand pistoles to serve her, your excessive love would come with better credentials; an offer of life is very proper for the attack of a counterfeiter; but a thousand ducats will sooner carry a lady's heart; you are a young man, but will learn this when you are older.

Lop. But since things have succeeded better this once, Sir, and that my master will prove a most incomparable good husband (for that he'll do, I'll answer for him) and that 'tis too late to recall what's already done, Sir—

Alv. What's done, villain?

Lop. Sir, I mean, that since my master and my lady are married, and—

Alv.

Alv. Thou ly'st; they are not married.

Lop. Sir! I say, that since they are married, and that they love each other so passing dearly, indeed I fancy that——

Alv. Why this impudence is beyond all bearing. Sir, do you put your rascal upon this?

Lor. 'Sir, I am in a wood;' I don't know what it is you mean.

Alv. 'And I am in a plain, Sir, and I think I may be 'understood.' Do you pretend you are married to my daughter?

Lor. Sir, 'tis my happiness on one side, as it is my misfortune on another.

Alv. And do you think this idle project can succeed? Do you believe your affirming you are married to her will induce both her and me to consent it shall be so?

Lop. Sir, I see you make my master almost out of his wits to hear you talk so: but I, who am but a stander-by now, as I was at the wedding, have mine about me, and desire to know, whether you think this project can succeed? Do you believe your affirming they are not married, will induce both him and I to give up the lady? One short question to bring this matter to an issue, why do you think they are not married?

Alv. Because she utterly renounces it.

Lop. And so she will her religion, if you attack it with that dreadful face. D'ye hear, Sir? the poor lady is in love heartily, and I wish all poor ladies that are so, would dispose of themselves so well as she has done; but you scare her out of her senses: bring her here into the room, speak gently to her, tell her you know the thing is done, that you have it from a man of honour, me: that may be you wish it had been otherwise, but are a christian and profess mercy, and therefore have resolved to pardon her: say this, and I shall appear a man of reputation, and have satisfaction made me.

Alv. Or an impudent rogue, and have all your bones broke.

Lop. Content.

Alv. Agreed. Leonora! Who's there? Call Leonora.

Lop.

Lop. All will go rarely, Sir; we shall have shot the gulf in a moment. [*Aside to Lorenzo.*

Enter Leonora.

Alv. Come hither, Leonora.

Lop. So, now we shall see.

Alv. I called you to answer for yourself; here's a strong claim upon you; if there be any thing in the pretended title, conceal it no farther, it must be known at last, it may as well be so now. Nothing is so uneasy as uncertainty; I would therefore be gladly freed from it: if you have done what I am told you have, 'tis a great fault indeed; but as I fear 'twill carry much of its punishment along with it, I shall rather reduce my resentment into mourning your misfortune, than suffer it to add to your affliction; therefore speak the truth.

Lop. Well, this is fair play; now I speak, Sir. You see, fair lady, the goodness of a tender father, nothing need therefore hinder you from owning a most loving husband. We had like to have been all together by the ears about this business, and pails of blood were ready to run about the house: but, thank Heaven, the sun shines out again, and one word from your sweet mouth makes fair weather for ever. My master has been forced to own your marriage, he begs you'll do so too.

Leo. What does this impudent rascal mean?

Lop. Ha! Madam—

Leo. Sir, I should be very glad to know [*To Lorenzo.*] what can have been the occasion of this wild report; sure you cannot be yourself a party in it.

Lop. He, he!

Lor. Forgive me, dear Leonora; I know you had strong reasons for the secret being longer kept; but 'tis not my fault, our marriage is disclosed.

Leo. Our marriage, Sir!

Lor. 'Tis known, my dear, tho' much against my will; but since 'tis so, 'twould be in vain for us to deny it longer.

Leo. Then, Sir, I am your wife! I fell in love with you, and married you without my father's knowledge?

Lor. I dare not be so vain to think 'twas love; I humbly am content to owe the blessing to your generosity;

sity; you saw the pains I suffered for your sake, and in compassion eased them.

Leo. I did, Sir! Sure this exceeds all human impudence.

Lop. Truly, I think it does. She'd make an incomparable actress. *[Aside.]*

Lor. I begin to be surpris'd, Madam, at your carrying this thing so far; you see there's no occasion for it; and for the discovery, I have already told you 'twas not my fault.

Lop. My master's! no, 'twas I did it: why what a bustle's here! I knew things would go well, and so they do, if folks would let them. But if ladies will be in their merriments, when gentlemen are upon serious business, why what a deuce can one say to them?

Leo. I see this fellow is to be an evidence in your plot; where you hope to drive, it is hard to guess; for if any thing can exceed its impudence, it is its folly. A noble stratagem indeed to win a lady by! I could be diverted by it, but that I see a face of villainy requires a rougher treatment: I could almost, methinks, forget my sex, and be my own avenger.

Lor. Madam, I am surpris'd beyond all—

Lop. Pray, Sir, let me come to her; you are so surpris'd, you make nothing on't: she wants a little snubbing. Look you, Madam, I have seen many a pleasant humour amongst ladies, but you out-cut them all. Here's contradiction with a vengeance! You han't been married eight and forty hours, and you are slap—at your husband's beard already: Why, do you consider who he is? who this gentleman is, and what he can do—by law? Why, he can lock you up—knock you down—tie you neck and heels—

Lor. Forbear, you insolent villain, you.

[Offering to strike him.]

Leo. That for what's past, however.

[Giving him a box on the ear.]

Lop. I think she gave me a box o' th' ear; ha!

[Exit Leonora.]

Sir, will you suffer your old servants to be used thus by new comers? It's a sham, a mere sham. Sir, will you take a poor dog's advice for once? She denies she's married

ried to you : take her at her word ; you have seen some of her humours——Let her go.

Alv. Well, gentlemen, thus far you see I've heard all with patience ; are you content ? Or how much farther do you design to go with this business ?

Lop. Why truly, Sir, we are near at a stand.

Alv. 'Tis time, you villain, you.

Lop. Why, an' I am a villain now, if every word I've spoke be not as true as——as the gazette : and your daughter's no better than a——a——a whimsical young woman, for making disputes among gentlemen. And if every body had their deserts, she'd have a good—I won't speak it out to inflame reckonings ; but let her go, master.

Alv. Sir, I don't think it well to spend any more words with your impudent and villainous servant here.

Lop. Thank you, Sir : but I'd let her go.

Alv. Nor have I more to say to you than this, that you must not think so daring an affront to my family can go unresented Farewel. [*Exit Alvarez.*]

Lor. Well, Sir, what have you to say for yourself now ?

Lop. Why, Sir, I only have to say, that I am a very unfortunate——middle-aged man ; and that I believe all the stars upon heaven and earth have been concerned in my destiny. Children now unborn will hereafter sing my downfall in mournful lines, and notes of doleful tune : I am at present troubled in mind, despair around me, signified in appearing gibbets, with a great bundle of dog-whips by way of preparation.

I therefore will go seek some mountain high,
If high enough some mountain may be found,
With distant valley, dreadfully profound,
And from the horrid cliff—look calmly all around. }

Farewel.

[*Aside.*]

Lor. No, Sirrah : I'll see your wretched end myself. Die here, villain.

[*Drawing his sword.*]

Lop. I can't, Sir, if any body looks upon me.

Lor. Away, you trifling wretch ! ' but think not to escape, for thou shalt have thy recompence.'

[*Exit Lorenzo.*]

Lop. Why, what a mischievous jade is this, to make

such an uproar in a family the first day of her marriage. Why my master won't so much as get a honey-moon out of her. 'Egad let her go. If she be thus in her soft and tender youth, she'll be rare company at three-score; Well, he may do as he pleases; but were she my dear, I'd let her go—Such a foot at her tail, I'd make the truth bounce out at her mouth, like a pellet from a pop-gun.

[Exit.]

End of the THIRD ACT.

A C T IV.

Enter Camillo and Isabella.

ISABELLA.

'TIS an unlucky accident, indeed.

Cam. Ah, Isabella! fate has now determined my undoing. This thing can ne'er end here. Leonora and Lorenzo must soon come to some explanation; the dispute is too monstrous to pass over, without further enquiry, which must discover all, ' and what will be the consequence, I tremble at: for whether Don Alvarez knows of the imposture, or whether he is deceived, with the rest of the world, when once it breaks out, and that the consequence is the loss of that great wealth he now enjoys by it, what must become of me? All paternal affections then must cease, and, regarding me as an unhappy instrument in the trouble which will then o'erload him, he will return me to my humble birth, and then I'm lost for ever.' But what, alas! will the deceived Lorenzo say? A wife, with neither fortune, birth, nor beauty, instead of one most plentifully endowed with all. O heavens! what a sea of misery have I before me!

Isab. Indeed you reason right, but these reflections are ill-timed; why did not you employ them sooner?

Cam. Because I loved.

Isab. And don't you do so now?

Cam. I do, and therefore 'tis I make these cruel just reflections.

Isab. So that love, I find, can do any thing.

Cam.

Cam. Indeed it can : its powers are wondrous great, its pains no tongue can tell, its bliss no heart conceive ; crowns cannot recompense its torments, heaven scarce supply its joys. My stake is of this value : O counsel me how I shall save it.

Isab. Alas ! that counsel's much beyond my wisdom's force, I see no way to help you.

Cam. And yet 'tis sure there's one.

Isab. What ?

Cam. Death.

Isab. There possibly may be another ; I have a thought this moment—Perhaps there's nothing in it ; yet a small passage comes to my remembrance, that I regarded little when it happened—I'll go and search for one may be of service. But hold ; I see Don Carlos : he'll but disturb us now ; let us avoid him. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter Don Carlos and Sancho.

Car. Repulsed again ! This is not to be borne. What though this villain's story be a falsehood, was I to blame to hearken to it ? This usage cannot be supported. How was it she treated thee ?

San. Never was ambassador worse received. Madam, my master asks ten thousand pardons, and humbly begs one moment's interview :—Be gone, you rascal, you. Madam, what answer shall I give my master ?—Tell him he's a villain.—Indeed, fair lady, I think this is hasty treatment.—Here, my footman, toss me this fellow out at the window ; and away she went to her devotions.

Car. Did you see Jacinta ?

San. Yes ; she saluted me with half-a-score rogues and rascals, too. I think our destinies are much alike, Sir : and o' my conscience, a couple of scurvy jades we are hampered with.

Car. Ungrateful woman, to receive with such contempt so quick a return of a heart so justly alarm'd.

San. Ha, ha, ha !

Car. What, no allowance to be made to the first transports of a lover's fury, when rous'd by so dreadful an appearance ? As just as my suspicions were, have I long suffer'd them to arraign her ?

San. No.

Car. Have I waited for oaths or imprecations to clear her?

San. No.

Car. Nay, even now, is not the whole world still in suspense about her, whilst I alone conclude her innocent?

San. 'Tis very true.

Car. She might, methinks, through this profound respect, observe a flame another would have cherished; she might support me against groundless fears, and save me from a rival's tyranny; she might release me from these cruel racks, and would, no doubt, if she could love as I do.

San. Ha, ha, ha!

Car. But since she don't, what do I do whining here? Curse on the base humilities of love!

San. Right.

Car. Let children kiss the rod that flays them; let dogs lie down and lick the shoe that spurns them.

San. Ay.

Car. I am a man, by nature meant for power; the sceptre's given us to wield, and we betray our trust whenever we meanly lay it at a woman's feet.

San. True, we are men; boo!—Come, master, let us both be in a passion; here's my sceptre. [*Shewing a cudgel.*] Subject Jacinta, look about you. Sir, was you ever in Muscovy? The women there love the men dearly. Why? Because——[*Shaking his stick.*] There's your love-powder for you. Ah, Sir, were we but wise and stout, what work should we make with them! But this humble love-making spoils them all. A rare way indeed to bring matters about with them! we are persuading them all day they are angels and goddesses, in order to use them at night like human creatures. We are like to succeed, truly.

Car. For my part, I never yet could bear a slight from any thing, nor will I now. There's but one way, however, to resent it from a woman, and that's to drive her bravely from your heart, and place a worthier in her vacant throne.

San. Now with submission to my betters, I have another way, Sir; I'll drive my tyrant from my heart, and place myself on her throne. Yes; I will be lord of my

own

own tenement, and keep my household in order. Would you would do so too, master; for, look you, I have been servitor in a college at Salamanca, and read philosophy with the doctors; where I found, that a woman, in all times, has been observed to be an animal hard to understand, and much inclined to mischief. Now as an animal is always an animal, and a captain always a captain, so a woman is always a woman; whence it is, that a certain Greek says, her head is like a bank of sand; or, as another, a solid rock; or, according to a third, a dark lantern. Pray, Sir, observe, for this is close reasoning; and so as the head is the head of the body; and that the body without a head, is like a head without a tail; and that where there is neither head nor tail, 'tis a very strange body; so I say, a woman is by comparison, do you see, (for nothing explains things like comparisons) I say by comparison, as Aristotle has often said before me, one may compare her to the raging sea; for, as the sea, when the wind rises, knits its brow like an angry bull, and that waves mount upon rocks, and rocks mount upon waves; that porpoises leap like trouts, and whales skip about like gudgeons; that ships roll like beer-barrels, and mariners pray like saints; just so, I say, a woman—a woman, I say, just so, when her reason is ship-wrecked upon her passion, and the hulk of her understanding lies thumping against the rock of her fury; then it is, I say, that by certain immotions, which—um——cause, as one may suppose, a sort of convulsive—yes—hurricanious—um—like——in short, a woman is like the devil, Sir.

Car. Admirably reasoned indeed, Sancho.

San. Pretty well, I thank heaven; but here come the crocodiles to weep us into mercy.

Enter Leonora and Jacinta.

Master, let us shew ourselves men, and leave their briny tears to wash their dirty faces.

Car. It is not in the power of charms to move me.

San. Nor me, I hope; and yet I fear those eyes will look out sharp to snatch up such a prize.

[Pointing to Jacinta.

Jacin. He's coming to us, Madam, to beg pardon; but sure you'll never grant it him?

Leo. If I do, 'may Heaven ne'er grant me mine.'

Facin. That's brave.

Car. You look, Madam, upon me, as if you thought I came to trouble you with my usual importunities; I'll ease you of that pain, by telling you, my business now is calmly to assure you, but I assure it you with heaven and hell for seconds; for may the joys of one fly from me, whilst the pains of t'other overtake me, if all your charms displayed e'er shake my resolution; I'll never see you more.

San. Bon.

Leo. You are a man of that nice honour, Sir, I know you'll keep your word; I expected this assurance from you, and came this way only to thank you for't.

Facin. Very well.

Car. You did, imperious dame, you did! How base is woman's pride? How wretched are the ingredients it is formed of. If you saw cause for just disdain, why did you not at first repulse me? Why lead a slave in chains, that could not grace your triumphs? If I am thus to be contemned, think on the favours you have done the wretch, and hide your face for ever.

San. Well argued.

Leo. I own you have hit the only fault the world can charge me with: the favours I have done to you, I am indeed ashamed of; but since women have their frailties, you'll allow me mine.

Car. 'Tis well, extremely well, Madam; I'm happy, however, you at last speak frankly; I thank you for it; from my soul I thank you; but don't expect me grovelling at your feet again; don't, for if I do——

Leo. You'll be treated as you deserve; trod upon.

Car. Give me patience;—but I don't want it; I am calm: Madam, farewell; be happy, if you can; by heavens, I wish you so; but never spread your net for me again; for if you do——

Leo. You'll be running into it.

Car. Rather run headlong into fire and flames; rather be torn with pincers bit from bit; rather be broiled like martyrs upon gridirons——But I am wrong; this sounds like passion, and Heaven can tell I am not angry. Ma-
dam,

dam, I think we have no farther business together ; your most humble servant.

Leo. Farewel t'ye, Sir.

Car. Come along. [*To Sancho.*] [*Goes to the Scene, and returns.*] Yet once more before I go (lest you should doubt my resolution) may I starve, perish, rot, be blasted, dead, damned, or any other thing that men or gods can think on, if on any occasion whatever, civil or military, pleasure or business, love or hate, or any other accident of life, I, from this moment, change one word or look with you. [*Going off, Sancho claps him on the back.*]

Leo. Content. Come away, Jacinta.

Carlos returns.

Car. Yet one word, Madam, if you please ; I have a little thing here belongs to you, a foolish bauble I once was fond of. [*Twitching her picture from his breast.*] Will you accept a trifle from your servant ?

Leo. Willingly, Sir ; I have a bauble, too, I think you have some claim to ; you'll wear it for my sake.

[*Breaks a bracelet from her arm, and gives it him.*]

Car. Most thankfully ; this too I should restore you, it once was yours——[*Giving her a table-book.*] By your favour, Madam——there is a line or two in it, I think you did me once the honour to write with your own fair hand. Here it is. [*Reads.*]

You love me, Carlos, and would know
The secret movements of my heart ;
Whether I give you mine or no,
With yours, methinks, I'd never, never part.

Thus you have encouraged me, and thus you have deceived me.

San. Very true.

Leo. I have some faithful lines, too ; I think I can produce them.

[*Pulls out a table-book ; reads, and then gives it him.*]

- How long foe'er, to sigh in vain,
My destiny may prove,
My fate (in spite of your disdain)
Will let me glory in your chain,
And give me leave eternally to love.

There,

There, Sir, take your poetry again. [*Throwing it at his feet.*] 'Tis not much the worse for my wearing; 'twill serve again upon a fresh occasion.

Jacin. Well done.

Car. I believe I can return the present, Madam, with
—a pocket full of your prose—There—

[*Throwing a handful of letters at her feet.*]

Leo. Jacinta, give me his letters. There, Sir, not to be behind-hand with you.

[*Takes a handful of his letters out of a box, and throws them in his face.*]

Jacin. And there, and there, and there, Sir.

[*Jacinta throws the rest at him.*]

San. 'Cods my life, we want ammunition; but for a shift—There, and there, you saucy slut, you.

[*Sancho pulls a pack of dirty cards out of his pocket, and throws them at her; then they close, he pulls off her headcloaths, and she his wig, and then part, she running to her mistress, he to his master.*]

Jacin. I think, Madam, we have clearly the better en't.

Leo. For a proof, I resolve to keep the field.

Jacin. Have a care he don't rally, and beat you yet, though. Pray, walk off.

Leo. Fear nothing.

San. How the armies stand and gaze at one another after the battle! What think you, Sir, of shewing your self a great general, by making an honourable retreat?

Car. I scorn it. Oh, Leonora! Leonora! A heart like mine should not be treated thus.

Leo. Carlos! Carlos! I have not deserved this usage.

Car. Barbarous Leonora! but 'tis useless to reproach you; she that is capable of what you have done, is formed too cruel ever to repent of it. Go on, then, tyrant; make your bliss complete; torment me still, for still, alas! I love enough to be tormented.

Leo. Ah, Carlos! little do you know the tender movements of that thing you name; the heart where love presides, admits no thought against the honour of its ruler.

Car. 'Tis not to call that honour into doubt, if, conscious

scious of our own unworthiness, we interpret every frown to our own destruction.

Leo. When jealousy proceeds from such humble apprehensions, it shews itself with more respect than yours has done.

Car. And where a heart is guiltless, it easily forgives a greater crime.

Leo. Forgiveness is not now in our debate; if both have been in fault, 'tis fit that both should suffer for it; our separation will do justice on us.

Car. But since we are ourselves the judges of our crimes, what if we should inflict a gentler punishment?

Leo. 'Twould but encourage us to sin again.

Car. And if it should——

Leo. 'Twould give a fresh occasion for the pleasing exercise of mercy.

Car. Right; and so we act the part of earth and heaven together, of men and gods, and taste of both their pleasures.

Leo. The banquet's too inviting to refuse it.

Car. Then thus let us fall on, and feed upon it for ever. [*Carries her off, embracing her, and kissing her hand.*]

Jacin. Ah, woman! foolish, foolish woman!

San. Very foolish, indeed.

Jacin. But don't expect I'll follow her example.

San. You would, Mopsy, if I'd let you.

Jacin. I'd sooner tear my eyes out! Ah——that she had had a little of my spirit in her.

San. I believe I shall find thou hast a great deal of her flesh, my charmer; but 'twon't do; I am all rock, hard rock, very marble.

Jacin. A very pumice-stone, you rascal, you, if one would try thee; but to prevent thy humiliities, and shew thee all submission would be vain, to convince thee thou hast nothing but misery and despair before thee, here——take back thy paltry thimble, and be in my debt, for the shirts I have made thee with it.

San. Nay, if y'are at that sport, mistress, I believe I shall lose nothing by the balance of thy presents. There, take thy tobacco-stopper, and stop thy——

Jacin. Here——take thy fatten pincushion, with thy curious half hundred of pins in it, thou mad'st such a vapour-

vapouring about yesterday. Tell them carefully; there's not one wanting.

San. There's thy ivory-hafted knife again; whet it well; 'tis so blunt 'twill cut nothing but love.

Jacin. And there's thy pretty pocket scissars thou hast honoured me with: they'll cut off a leg or an arm, heaven bless them.

San. Here's the enchanted handkerchief you were pleased to endear with your precious blood, when the violence of your love at dinner t'other day, made you cut your fingers—There——

[Blows his nose in it, and gives it to her.]

Jacin. The rascal so provokes me, I won't even keep his paltry garters from him. Do you see these, you pitiful, beggarly scoundrel you?—There, take 'em—there.

[She takes her garters off, and slaps them about his face.]

San. I have but one thing more of thine. *[Shewing his eudgel.]* I own 'tis the top of all thy presents, and might be useful to me; but that thou may'st have nothing to upbraid me with, e'en take it again with the rest of them.

[Lifting it up to strike her, she leaps about his neck.]

Jacin. Ah, cruel Sancho!—Now beat me, Sancho, do.

San. Rather, like Indian beggars, beat my precious self.

[Throws away his stick, and embraces her.]

Rather let infants' blood about the streets,

Rather let all the wine about the cellar,

Rather let——Oh, Jacinta, thou hast o'ercome!

How foolish are the great resolves of man!

Resolves which we neither would keep, nor can.

When those bright eyes in kindness please to shine,

Their goodness I must needs return with mine;

Bless my Jacinta in her Sancho's arms——

Jacin. And I my Sancho with Jacinta's charms:

[Exit.]

END of the FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

SCENE, *the Street.**Enter Lopez.*

LOPEZ.

AS soon as it is night, says my master to me, tho' it cost me my life, I'll enter Leonora's lodgings; therefore, make haste, Lopez, prepare every thing necessary, three pair of pocket-pistols, two wide-mouthed blunderbusses, some six ells of sword-blade, and a couple of dark lanthorns. When my master said this to me, Sir, said I to my master (that is, I would have said it, if I had not been in such a fright I could say nothing; however, I'll say it to him now, and shall probably have a quiet hearing) 'Look you, Sir, by dint of reason I intend to confound you. You are resolved, you say, to get into Leonora's lodgings, tho' the devil stand in the doorway?—Yes, Lopez, that's my resolution—Very well; and what do you intend to do when you are there?—Why, what an injured man should do, make her sensible of—Make her sensible of a pudding! Don't you see she's a jade? She'll raise the house about your ears, arm the whole family, set the great dog at you—Were there three legions of devils to repulse me, in such a cause I could disperse them all—Why, then you have no occasion for help, Sir; you may leave me at home to lay the cloth—No, thou art my ancient friend, my fellow-traveller; and to reward thy faithful services, this night thou shalt partake my danger and my glory—Sir, I have got glory enough under you already to content any reasonable servant for his life—Thy modesty makes me willing to double my bounty; this night may bring eternal honour to thee and thy family—Eternal honour, Sir, is too much in conscience for a serving-man; besides, ambition has been many a great soul's undoing—I doubt thou art afraid, my Lopez; thou shalt be armed with back, with breast, and head-piece—They will incumber me in my retreat—Retreat, my hero! thou never shalt retreat—Then, by my troth, I'll never go, Sir.'—But here he comes.

Enter

Enter Lorenzo.

Lor. Will it never be night? Sure 'tis the longest day the sun e'er travelled.

Lop. Would 'twere as long as those in Greenland, Sir, that you might spin out your life t'other half-year. I don't like these nightly projects; a man can't see what he does. We shall have some scurvy mistake or other happen; a brace of bullets blunder thro' your head in the dark, perhaps, and spoil all your intrigue.

Lor. Away, you trembling wretch, away.

Lop. Nay, Sir, what I say is purely for your safety; for as to myself—Uds-death! I no more value the losing a quart of blood, than I do drinking a quart of wine. Besides, my veins are too full; my physician advised me but yesterday to let go twenty ounces for my health. So, you see, Sir, there's nothing of that in the case.

Lor. Then let me hear no other objections; for till I see Leonora, I must lie upon the rack. I cannot bear her resentment, and will pacify her this night, or not live to see to-morrow.

Lop. Well, Sir, since you are so determined, I shan't be impertinent with any farther advice; but I think you have laid your design to—*[He coughs.]* (I have got such a cold to-day) to get in privately, have you not?

Lor. Yes, and have taken care to be introduced as far as her chamber-door with all secrecy.

Lop. *[He coughs.]* This unlucky cough! I had rather have had a fever at another time. Sir, I should be sorry to do you more harm than good upon this occasion. If this cough should come upon me in the midst of the action, *[Coughs.]* and give the alarm to the family, I should not forgive myself as long as I lived.

Lor. I have greater ventures than that to take my chance for, and can't dispense with your attendance, Sir.

Lop. This 'tis to be a good servant, and make one's self necessary.

Enter Toledo.

Tol. Sir, I am glad I have found you. I am a man of honour, you know, and do always profess losing my life upon a handsome occasion. Sir, I come to offer you my service. I am informed, from unquestionable hands, that Don Carlos is enraged against you to a dangerous degree;

gree ; and that old Alvarez has given positive directions to break the legs and arms of your servant Lopez.

Lop. Look you there now ; I thought what 'twould come to. What do they meddle with me for ? What have I to do with my master's amours ? The old Don's got out of his senses, I think. Have I married his daughter ?

Lor. Fear nothing ; we'll take care o' thee—Sir, I thank you for the favour of your intelligence ; 'tis nothing, however, but what I expected, and am provided for.

Tol. Sir, I would advise you to provide yourself with good friends ; I desire the honour to keep your back-land myself.

Lop. 'Tis very kind, indeed. Pray, Sir, have you never a servant with you could hold a racket for me too ?

Tol. I have two friends fit to head two armies ; and yet—a word in your ear—they shan't cost you above a ducat a-piece.

Lop. Take 'em, by all means, Sir ; you were never offered a better pennyworth in your life.

Tol. Ah, Sir—little Diego—you have heard of him ; he'd been worth a legion upon this occasion. You know, I suppose, how they have served him. They have hanged him ; but he made a noble execution ; they clapped the rack and the priest to him at once, but could neither get a word of confession, nor a groan of repentance ; he died mighty well, truly.

Lor. Such a man is indeed much to be regretted. As for the rest of your escorte, Captain, I thank you for 'em, but shall not use 'em.

Tol. I'm sorry for it, Sir, because I think you go in very great danger ; I'm much afraid your rival won't give you fair play.

Lop. If he does, I'll be hanged ; he's a damn'd passionate fellow, and cares not what mischief he does.

Lor. I shall give him a very good opportunity ; for I'll have no other guards about me but you, Sir. So come along.

Lop. Why, Sir, this is the sin of presumption, setting Heaven at defiance, making a jack-pudding of a blunderbuss.

Lor. No more, but follow. Hold ! turn this way ; I see

see Camillo there. I would avoid him, till I see what part he takes in this odd affair of his sister's. For I would not have the quarrel fixed with him, if it be possible to avoid it. [Exit.

Lop. Sir—Captain Toledo, one word, if you please, Sir; I'm mighty sorry to see my master won't accept of your friendly offer. Look ye, I'm not very rich; but as far as the expence of a dollar went, if you'd be so kind to take a little care of me, it should be at your service.

Tol. Let me see—A dollar, you say? But suppose I'm wounded?

Lop. Why, you shall be put to no extraordinary charge upon that; I have been 'prentice to a barber, and will be your surgeon myself.

Tol. 'Tis too cheap, in conscience; but my land-estate is so ill paid this war time——

Lop. That a little industry may be commendable. So say no more; that matter's fixed. [Exit.

Enter Camillo.

Cam. 'How miserable a perplexity have I brought myself into! Yet why do I complain, since, with all the dreadful torture I endure, I can't repent of one wild step I've made? Oh, love! what tempests canst thou raise, what storms canst thou assuage! To all thy cruelties I am resigned; long years thro' seas of torment I'm content to roll, so thou wilt guide me to the happy port of my Lorenzo's arms, and bless me there with one calm day at last.'

Enter Isabella.

What news, dear Isabella? Methinks there's something chearful in your looks may give a trembling lover hopes. If you have comfort for me, speak; for I indeed have need of it.

Isab. Were your wants yet still greater than they are, I bring a plentiful supply.

Cam. Oh, heavens! Is't possible?

Isab. New mysteries are out; and if you can find charms to wean Lorenzo from your sister, no other obstacle is in your way to all you wish.

Cam. Kind messenger from heaven, speak on.

Isab. Know then, that you are daughter to Alvarez.

Cam. How! daughter to Alvarez?

Ifab. You are. The truth's this moment come to light; and till this moment he, altho' your father, was a stranger to it; nay, did not even know you were a woman. In short, the great estate which has occasioned such uncommon accidents, was left but on condition of a son; great hopes of one there was, when you destroyed them, and to your parents came a most unwelcome guest. To repair the disappointment, you were exchanged for that young Camillo, who a few months after died. Your father then was absent; but your mother, quick in contrivance, bold in execution, during that infant's sickness, had resolved his death should not deprive her family of those advantages his life had given it; so ordered things with such dexterity, that once again there passed a change between you. Of this, for reasons yet unknown to me, she made a secret to her husband, and took such wise precautions, that till this hour 'twas so to all the world, except the person from whom I now have heard it.

Cam. This news indeed affords a view of no unhappy termination; yet there are difficulties still may be of fatal hindrance.

Ifab. None, except that one I just now named to you; for to remove the rest, know I have already unfolded all, both to Alvarez and Don Felix.

Cam. And how have they received it?

Ifab. To your wishes both. As for Lorenzo, he is yet a stranger to all has passed; and the two old fathers desire he may some moments longer continue so. They have agreed to be a little merry with the heat he is in, and engage you in a family quarrel with him.

Cam. I doubt, Isabella, I shall act that part but faintly.

Ifab. No matter; you'll make amends for it in the scene of reconciliation.

Cam. Pray Heaven it may be my lot to act it with him.

Ifab. Here comes Don Felix to wish you joy.

Enter Don Felix.

Don Fel. Come near, my daughter, and with extended arms of great affection let me receive thee. [*Kisses her.*] Thou art a dainty wench, good faith, thou art, and 'tis a mettled action thou hast done. If Lorenzo don't like thee the better for't, God's my life, he's a pitiful fellow, and I shan't believe the bonny old man had the getting of him.

E

Cam.

Cam. I'm so encouraged by your forgiveness, Sir, methinks I have some flattering hopes of his.

Don Fel. O his! 'Egad and he had best, I believe, he'll meet with his match if he don't. What dost think of trying his courage a little, by way of a joke, or so?

Ifab. I was just telling her your design, Sir.

Don Fel. Why I'm in a mighty witty way upon this whimsical occasion: but I see him coming. You must not appear yet; go your way in to the rest of the people there, and I'll inform him what a squabble he has work'd himself into here.

[*Exeunt Camillo and Isabella.*

Enter Lorenzo and Lopez.

Lop. Pray, Sir, don't be so obstinate now, don't affront heav'n at this rate. I had a vision last night about this business, on purpose to forewarn you; I dreamt of goose-eggs, a blunt knife, and the snuff of a candle; I'm sure there's mischief towards you.

Lor. You cowardly rascal, hold your tongue.

Don Fel. Lorenzo, come hither, my boy, I was just going to send for thee. The honour of our ancient family lies in thy hands; there is a combat preparing, thou must fight, my son.

Lop. Look you there now, did not I tell you? O dreams are wond'rous things. I never knew that snuff of a candle fail yet.

Lor. Sir, I do not doubt but Carlos seeks my life, I hope he'll do it fairly.

Lop. Fairly, do you hear, fairly! Give me leave to tell you, Sir, folks are not fit to be trusted with lives, that don't know how to look better after them. Sir, you gave it him, I hope you'll make him take a little more care on't.

Don Fel. My care shall be to make him do as a man of honour ought to do.

Lop. What, will you let him fight, then? Let your own flesh and blood fight?

Don Fel. In a good cause, as this is.

Lop. O monstrum horrendum! Now I have that humanity about me, that if a man but talks to me of fighting, I shiver at the name on't.

Lor.

Lor. What you do on this occasion, Sir, is worthy of you; and had I been wanting to you in my due regards before, this noble action wou'd have stamped that impression, which a grateful son ought to have for so generous a father.

Lop. Very generous, truly! gives him leave to be run through the guts, for his posterity to brag on a hundred years hence. [*Aside.*]

Lor. I think, Sir, as things now stand, it won't be right for me to wait for Carlos's call! I'll, if you please, prevent him.

Lop. Ay, pray Sir, do prevent him by all means; 'tis better made up, as you say, a thousand times.

Don Fel. Hold your tongue, you impertinent Jack-anapes, I will have him fight, and fight like a fury, too; if he don't, he'll be worsted, I can tell him that. For know, son, your antagonist is not the person you name, it is an enemy of twice his force.

Lop. O dear, O dear, O dear! and will nobody keep them asunder?

Lor. Nobody shall keep us asunder, if once I know the man I have to deal with.

Don Fel. Thy man then is—Camillo:

Lor. Camillo!

Don Fel. 'Tis he; he'll suffer nobody to decide this quarrel but himself.

Lop. Then there are no seconds, Sir.

Don Fel. None.

Lop. He's a brave man.

Don Fel. No, he says, nobody's blood shall be spilt on this occasion, but theirs who have a title to it.

Lop. I believe, he'll scarce have a law-suit upon the claim.

Don Fel. In short, he accuses thee of a shameful falsehood, in pretending his sister Leonora was thy wife; and has upon it prevail'd with his father, as thou hast done with thine, to let the debate be ended by the sword 'twixt him and thee.

Lop. And pray, Sir, with submission, one short question, if you please; What may the gentle Leonora say of this business?

Don Fel. She approves of the combat, and marries Carlos.

Lop. Why, God a-mercy.

Lor. Is it possible? Sure she's a devil, not a woman.

Lop. I-cod, Sir, a devil, and a woman both, I think.

Don Fel. Well, thou shalt have satisfaction of some of them. Here they all come.

Enter Alvarez, Leonora, Carlos, Sancho and Jacinta.

Alv. Well, Don Felix, have you prepar'd your son? for mine, he's ready to engage.

Lor. And so is his. My wrongs prepare me for a thousand combats. My hand has hitherto been held, by the regard I've had to every thing of kin to Leonora; but since the monstrous part she acts has driven her from my heart, I call for reparation from her family.

Alv. You'll have it, Sir; Camillo will attend you instantly.

Lop. O lack! O lack! will nobody do a little something to prevent bloodshed? Why, Madam, have you no pity, no bowels? [*To Leonora.*] Stand and see one of your husbands slaughter'd before your face? 'Tis an arrant shame.

Leo. If widowhood be my fate, I must bear it as I can.

Lop. Why, did you ever hear the like?

Lor. Talk to her no more. Her monstrous impudence is no otherwise to be replied to, than by a dagger in her brother's heart.

Leo. Yonder he's coming to receive it. But have a care, brave Sir, he does not place it in another's?

Lor. It is not in his power. He has a rotten cause upon his sword; I'm sorry he is engag'd in it; but since he is, he must take his fate. For you, my bravo, expect me in your turn. [*To Carlos.*]

Car. You'll find Camillo, Sir, will set your hand out.

Lor. A beardless boy. You might have match'd me better, Sir; but prudence is a virtue.

Don Fel. Nay, son, I would not have thee despise thy adversary, neither; thou'lt find Camillo will put thee hardly to't.

Lor. I wish we were come to the trial. Why does he not appear?

Jacin. Now do I hate to hear people brag thus. Sir, with my lady's leave, I'll hold a ducat he disarms you.

[*They laugh.*]

Lor. Why, what!—I think I'm sported with. Take heed, I warn you all; I am not to be trifled with.

Enter Camillo and Isabella.

Leo. You sha'n't, Sir; here's one will be in earnest with you.

Lor. He's welcome: though I had rather have drawn my sword against another. I'm sorry, Camillo, we should meet on such bad terms as these; yet more sorry your sister should be the wicked cause on't: but since nothing will serve her but the blood either of a husband or brother, she shall be glutted with it—Draw!

Lop. Ah, Lard! ah, Lard! ah, Lard!

Lor. And yet, before I take this instrument of death into my fatal hand, hear me, Camillo; hear, Alvarez; all; I imprecate the utmost powers of heav'n to shower upon my head the deadliest of its wrath; 'I ask, that all hell's torment may unite to round my soul with one eternal anguish,' if wicked Leonora ben't my wife.

Omnes. O Lord, O Lord, O Lord!

Leo. Why then, may all those curses pass him by, 'and wrap me in their everlasting pains,' if ever once I had a fleeting thought of making him my husband.

Lop. O Lord, O Lord, O Lord!

Leo. Nay, more; to strike him dumb at once, and shew what men with honest looks can practise, know, he's married to another.

Alv. and Fel. How?

Leo. The truth of this is known to some that are here.

Jac. Nay, 'tis certainly so.

Isa. 'Tis to a friend of mine.

Car. I know the person.

Lor. 'Tis false, and thou art a villain for thy testimony.

Cam. Then let me speak: what they aver is true, and I myself was, in disguise, a witness of its doing.

Lor. Death and confusion! He a villain, too! Have at thy heart.

[*He draws.*]

Lop.

Lop. Ah!—I can't bear the sight on't.

Cam. Put up that furious thing, there's no business for't.

Lor. There's business for a dagger, stripling; 'tis that should be thy recompence.

Cam. Why then, to shew thee naked to the world, and close thy mouth for ever—I am myself thy wife—

Lor. What does the dog mean?

Cam. To fall upon the earth, and sue for mercy.

[*Kneels, and lets her periwig fall off.*]

Lor. A woman!—

Lop. I-cod, and a pretty one, too; you wags, you.

Lor. I'm all amazement. Rise, Camillo (if I am still to call you by that name) and let me hear the wonders you have for me.

Isab. That part her modesty will ask from me: I'm to inform you then, that this disguise hides other mysteries besides a woman; a large and fair estate was cover'd by't, which, with the lady, now will be resigned to you. 'Tis true, in justice it was yours before; but 'tis the god of love had done you right. To him you owe this strange discovery; through him you are to know, the true Camillo's dead, and that this fair adventurer is daughter to Alvarez.

Lor. Incredible! But go on; let me hear more.

Don Fel. She'll tell thee the rest herself, the next dark night she meets thee in the garden.

Lor. Ha!—Was it Camillo then, that I—

Isab. It was Camillo who there made you happy: and who has virtue, beauty, wit and love—enough to make you so, while life shall last you.

Lor. The proof she gives me of her love, deserves a large acknowledgment, indeed. Forgive me, therefore, Leonora, if what I owe this goodness, and these charms, I with my utmost care, my life, my soul, endeavour to repay.

Cam. Is it then possible you can forgive me?

Lor. Indeed I can; few crimes have such a claim to mercy; but join with me then, dear Camillo, (for still I know you by no other name) join with me to obtain your father's pardon: yours, Leonora, too, I must implore: and yours, my friend, for now we may be such [*To Carlos.*]

los.] Of all I ask forgiveness. And since there is so fair a cause of all my wild mistakes, I hope, I by her interest shall obtain it.

Alv. You have a claim to mine, Lorenzo, I wish I had so strong a one to yours; but if by future services (tho' I lay down my life amongst them) I may blot out of your remembrance a fault (I cannot name) I then shall leave the world in peace.

Lor. In peace then, Sir, enjoy it; for, from this very hour, whate'er is past with me, is gone for ever. 'Your daughter is too fair a mediatrix to be refused his pardon, to whom she owes the charms she pleads with for it.'

Car. From this good day, then let all discord cease;
 Let those to come be harmony and peace;
 Henceforth let all our diff'rent interests join,
 Let fathers, lovers, friends, let all combine,
 To make each other's days as blest as she will mine. }



EPILOGUE,

Written by Mr. MOTTUEUX.

*I'M thinking, now good husbands are so few,
 To get one like my friend, what I must do.
 Camillo ventur'd hard; yet at the worst;
 She stole love's honey-moon, and try'd her lover first.
 Many poor damsels, if they dar'd to tell,
 Have done as much, but have not 'scap'd so well.
 'Tis well the scene's in Spain; thus in the dark
 I should be loth to trust a London spark.
 Some accident might, for a private reason,
 Silence a female all this acting season,
 Hard fate of woman! any one would vex,
 To think what odds you men have of our sex.
 Restraint and customs share our inclination,
 You men can try, and run o'er half the nation.
 We dare not, even to avoid reproach,
 When ye're at White's, peep out of hackney-coach;
 Nor with a friend at night, our fame regarding,
 With glass drawn up, drive about Covent-Garden.
 If poor town-ladies steal in here, you rail,
 Tho', like chaste nuns, their modest looks they veil;
 With this decorum they can hardly gain
 To be thought virtuous ev'n in Drury-Lane.
 Tho' this you'll not allow, yet sure you may
 A plot to snap you, in an honest way.
 In love-affairs, one scarce would spare a brother;
 All cheat; and married folks may keep a pother,
 But look as if they cheated one another.
 You may pretend our sex dissembles most;
 But of your truth none have much cause to boast.
 You promise bravely; but for all your storming,
 We find you're not so valiant at performing.
 Then sure Camillo's conduct you'll approve:
 Would you not do as much for one you love?
 Wedlock's but a blind bargain at the best,
 You venture more sometimes to be not half so blest'd;
 All soon or late that dangerous venture make,
 And some of you may make a worse mistake.*





J. Roberts del.

Published for the British Theatre March 1778.

Thornthwaite fecit.

M^{rs} BULKLEY in the Character of M^{rs} WILKING.

BELL'S EDITION.

THE
GAMESTERS.

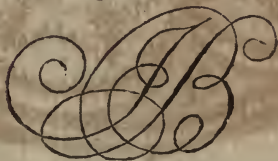
A COMEDY,

As altered from SHIRLET.

DISTINGUISHING ALSO THE
VARIATIONS OF THE THEATRE,
AS PERFORMED AT THE

Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane.

Regulated from the Prompt-Book,
By PERMISSION of the MANAGERS,
By Mr. HOPKINS, Prompter.



L O N D O N:

Printed for JOHN BELL, near Exeter-Exchange, in the Strand.

MDCCLXXVIII.

DELL'S EXHIBIT

THE

GAMMA 2

A COMPANY

OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

INCORPORATED IN THE STATE OF NEW YORK

STATEMENT OF THE INVESTMENT

AS OF THE 31ST DECEMBER 1900

ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

ASSETS

LIABILITIES

ASSETS

LIABILITIES

ASSETS

LIABILITIES

ASSETS

LIABILITIES

ASSETS

LIABILITIES

ASSETS

LIABILITIES

ADVERTISEMENT.

IN the year 1711, Mr. Charles Johnson altered the Gamester, written originally by Shirley, into a comedy, which he called the Wife's Relief, or the Husband's Cure : in this play he retained Shirley's underplot of Léonora, Violante and Beaumont ; which has no necessary dependence upon the principal action, and has therefore been generally censured as impertinent ; nor has it, separately considered, any excellence to atone for that defect. The editor of the Gamesters, as it is now a second time altered from Shirley, will not presume to offer any objections to the alterations and additions which Mr. Johnson has been pleased to make. It will be sufficient for him to inform the reader, that he has nothing in common with Johnson, but what both he and Johnson have in common with Shirley. The characters of Barnacle and the Nephew, which were before unconnected with the principal action, are now interwoven with it : what alterations and additions have been now made, will be better known by a comparison of this play with the original,* and are with great deference, submitted to the candour of the public.

* It is printed in the eighth volume of the collection of old plays, published by Mr. Dodsley.

THE HISTORY OF THE

INDEPENDENT CHURCH OF THE
TOWN OF NEW-YORK
FROM THE FIRST SETTLING OF THE
TOWN TO THE PRESENT TIME
BY
JAMES M. SMITH
PUBLISHED BY
J. M. SMITH
NEW-YORK
1840

THE HISTORY OF THE
INDEPENDENT CHURCH OF THE
TOWN OF NEW-YORK
FROM THE FIRST SETTLING OF THE
TOWN TO THE PRESENT TIME
BY
JAMES M. SMITH
PUBLISHED BY
J. M. SMITH
NEW-YORK
1840

P R O L O G U E.

Written and Spoken by Mr. GARRICK.

WHENE'ER the wits of France take pen in hand,
 To give a sketch of you, and this our land ;
 One settled maxim thro' the whole you see——
 To wit—their great superiority !
 Urge what you will, they still have this to say ;
 That you who ape them, are less wise than they.
 'Tis thus these well-bred letter-writers use us ;
 They trip o'er here, with half an eye peruse us ;
 Embrace us, eat our meat, and then---abuse us.
 When this same play was writ, that's now before ye, —
 The English stage had reach'd its point of glory !
 No paucity thefts disgrac'd this author's pen,
 He painted English manners, English men ; —
 And form'd his taste on Shakespeare and old Ben.
 Then were French farces, fashions, quite unknown ;
 Our wits wrote well, and all they writ their own :
 These were the times when no infatuation,
 No vicious modes, no zeal for imitation,
 Had chang'd, deform'd, and sunk the British nation.
 Should you be ever from yourselves estrang'd,
 The cock will crow, to see the lion chang'd !
 To boast our liberty is weak and vain,
 While tyrant vices in our bosoms reign ;
 Not liberty alone a nation saves ;
 Corrupted freemen are the worst of slaves.
 Let Prussia's sons each English breast inflame ;
 O be our spirit, as our cause, the same !
 And as our hearts with one religion glow,
 Let us with all their ardors drive the foe,
 As Heav'n had rais'd our arm, as Heav'n had giv'n the
 blow !
 Would you re-kindle all your ancient fires ?
 Extinguish first your modern, vain desires :
 Still it is yours, your glories to retrieve ;
 Lop but the branches, and the tree shall live ;
 With these erect a pile for sacrifice !
 And in the midst --throw all your cards and dice ?
 Then fire the heap ; and as it sinks to earth,
 The British genius shall have second birth !
 Shall, phoenix-like, rise perfect from the flame,
 Spring from the dust, and mount again to fame !

D R A M A T I S P E R S O N Æ.

M E N.

Drury-Lane.

<i>Wilding,</i>	-	-	Mr. King.
<i>Hazard,</i>	-	-	Mr. Reddish.
<i>Acreless,</i>	-	-	Mr. Wheeler.
<i>Littlestock,</i>	-	-	Mr. Fawcett.
<i>Sellaway,</i>	-	-	Mr. Keen.
<i>Barnacle,</i>	-	-	Mr. Parsons.
<i>Nephew,</i>	-	-	Mr. Dodd.
<i>Dwindle,</i>	-	-	Mr. Waldron.
<i>Page,</i>	-	-	Master Pulley.
<i>Box-keeper,</i>	-	-	Mr. Griffith.
<i>' Servant,</i>	-	-	
<i>' Carclefs,</i>	-	-	
<i>Drawer,</i>	-	-	Mr. Nash.

W O M E N.

<i>Mrs. Wilding,</i>	-	-	Miss Younge.
<i>Penelope,</i>	-	-	Mrs. Abington.

THE GAMESTERS.

* * *The lines distinguished by inverted commas, 'thus,' are omitted in the Representation, and those printed in Italics are the additions of the Theatre.*

ACT I.

Enter Wilding and Penelope.

WILDING.

WHAT need you be so coy now ?

Pen. Pray collect

Yourself ; remember what you are, and whose :
You have a virtuous gentlewoman ; think
Upon your faith to her.

Wild. Think of a fiddle-stick !

While you put me in mind of what I am,
You quite forget yourself. My wife, I allow,
Your kinswoman far off ; to whom, a widow,
Your father left you, with a handsome fortune ;
Which, by her marriage, I have in possession,
And you too : therefore, as you hope to be
In due time worth a husband, think upon't.
I can deserve respect ; then wisely use me,
As you would keep me.

Pen. This is but a trial

Of my strength ; for I know you have more charity,
(Should I consent) than shipwreck your own honour.
But take heed, Sir, how you proceed to jest
With frailty ; lest too much disordering

Your

8 T H E G A M E S T E R S.

Your good thoughts, you forget, and by degrees
Lose your own innocence.

Wild. I jest! you'd have me swear;
And yet you should not think it such a wonder
To love, sure. Come, shake off this frost; it spoils thee;
Your nature should be soft and flexible.
Perhaps, thou think'st—I do not love thee heartily:
I know not how to give thee better testimony,
Than by offering myself to thee: if my wife die,
(As ten to one she's not immortal) we
May couple t'other way.

Pen. What argument is this
To assure the truth of your affection to me,
That break your vows to her?

Wild. Oh! great argument,
An' you observe: she was a widow when
I marry'd her; thou'rt a young maid, and handsome.

Pen. Can you be so ungrateful then, to punish
Whom you should reward? Remember, Sir, she brought
you

That wealth you have; took you from nothing——

Wild. There's reason then for nothing I should love
Hang her estate! I was held a proper man; ——— [her.
And in that point deserv'd her, an' she had millions:
An' I were free again, I would not draw
I'th' team of marriage, for ten subsidies;
Not to command a province.

Pen. Yet, you said,
Were your wife dead, you'd marry me.

Wild. Only thee, and nobody else.

Pen. 'Twere dangerous to have many.

Wild. To have one is little less than madness. Come,
wo't promise?

Enter Mrs. Wilding, behind.

Pen. What?

Wild. A'course you know my meaning.

Mrs. Wild. I do not like this whispering; why with
So close in parly? [her

Wild. Wo't thou do this feat for me?

'Tis finish'd in a pair of minutes.

Pen. Yes, upon one condition.

Wild. What condition?

Pen.

Pen. That your wife give consent ; you shall then command me. [Exit.

Wild. I'll undertake to go a pilgrimage
To Jerusalem, and return sooner. Would
I did not love thee, love thee infinitely——
That's all ; 'two'not do—My wife ! I hope
She has not eaves-dropp'd us. What pity 'tis
She cannot find the way to Heav'n. I should not
Trouble her in haste. These wives will have no con-
But stick to us everlastingly. Now, lady, [science.
How did your monkey rest last night ? you look
As you had not said your prayers yet ; I won't disturb
you:

Mrs. Wild. Pray, Sir, stay ; let me but know
Some reason, why you use me thus unkindly ?
If I have been guilty of offence, I am not
Past hope, but with the knowledge of my error
'Tis possible I may mend and please you.

Wild. I do not like you.

Mrs. Wild. You did marry me.

[for't.

Wild. Yes, I did marry you ; here's too much record
I would there were a parson to unmarry us !
If any of our clergy had that faculty,
He might repair the old, and build as many
New abbeys through the kingdom, in a twelvemonth.
Shall I speak truth ? I never much affected thee :
I marry'd thee for thy soul's sake, not thy body :
Yet I do not hate thee. Witness, I dare kiss ;
Hold thee by the hand, sleep in the same house,
Nay, in the same bed sometimes ; but——

Mrs. Wild. What, Sir ?

Wild. You have a scurvy quality, wife ; I told you on't.

Mrs. Wild. Once more ; and I'll correct it.

Wild. You are given to be jealous. I cannot
Ramble abroad in gentlemen's company
Whole days, lie out a nights, but you suspect
I am wanton. 'Tis ill done ; it becomes no modest
Woman that loves her husband, to be jealous,
Whate'er she sees or hears ; mend, mend this fault,
You do not know how it may work upon me.
Some wives will bid their husband's leverets welcome ;
Nay, keep house together ; but you ne'er did it :

Know

Know their own chamber, and not come forth
Till they be sent for. These morals I have read
Before now, but you put them not in practice;
Nor, for ought I perceive, have disposition to't:
Therefore I'll take my course.

Mrs. Wild. To shew I can
Be obedient to my griefs; from this time, Sir,
I wo't not urge with one unwelcome syllable,
How much I am neglected; I'll conceal it
Too from the world: your shame must needs be mine:
I see you do not love me; where your heart
Hath plac'd a worthier thought, let it dwell ever;
Freely pursue your pleasures; I will have
No passion that shall mutiny; you are,
And shall be lord of me still.

Wild. I like this, if it be no disguise.

Mrs. Wild. Do not suspect me;
I would swear by a kiss, if you'd vouchsafe it;
You shall not keep a servant, that shall be more humble.

Wild. And obedient to my will?

Mrs. Wild. In all things.

Wild. I'll try you then.

[*Aside.*

But if I bring home a mistress—

Mrs. Wild. I'll be patient.

Wild. What if there be one
Already that does please me? Will you not
Repine, and look awry upon's, when we
Make much of one another?

Mrs. Wild. So you will but sometimes smile on me
too, I'll endeavour.

Wild. Well said; this may do good upon me; as
I find you prompt in this, I may consider
Other matters: to tell you true, I like
Your kinswoman.

Mrs. Wild. How!

Wild. How? why as a man should like her; but
I find her cold and peevish. How she may
Be brought about, I know not. 'Twould shew well,
And be a precedent for other wives,
If you would put your help to't.

Mrs. Wild. Goodness bless me!

Wild.

Wild. One woman with another can do more,
In such a cause, than twenty men. I do not
Wander, you see, out of the blood; this will
Be a way to justify your obedience.

Mrs. Wild. You shew a tyrant now; and, stead of
My soul to patience, murder both. [framing

Wild. Nay, nay, child, if you are out of humour at
trifles, I must leave you. [Going.

Mrs. Wild. Stay, Sir.

Wild. Not now, my dear—when you are cool again,
you may expect me. [Exit singing.

Mrs. Wild. This is not to be borne; my patience is
worn out; and, one way or other, I must have some re-
spite to my tortures. [Exit.

SCENE, the Street.

Enter Wilding.

Wild. I have gone too far, a conscience——this may
spoil all; and, now I think upon it, I was a coxcomb to
discover any party. I must deny it again, and carry
things more closely. But let me see, why do I use this
wife of mine thus terribly? She gave me all—ay, that
all's the devil! my desires are satisfied, and I have not a
grain of inclination left; variety is the thing—in eat-
ing, music, wine, or women; nothing but variety gives
the palate to them all: now, my wife is always the same
tune, the same dish, the same dull bottle of port; and, to
sum up all, the same woman—'twill never do. How
now, Will?

Enter Hazard.

Haz. How now, Will! is that all?
Look up, and ask me a question like a man;
What, melancholy?

Wild. No, no; a toy, a trifle.

Haz. That should be a woman; who is't thou art
I have been of your counsel— [thinking on?

Wild. I was thinking—o' my wife.

We have had a dialogue; come thou know'st my bosom.

Haz. When dost mean to use her well?

Wild. I know not; but I have offer'd fair conditions.
She is very confident I do not doat
Upon her beauty: I have told her, firrah,
I love her kinswoman.

Haz.

Haz. Y'are not so mad ?

Wild. The world's deceiv'd in her ; she'll give me leave
To ramble where I list ; and feed upon
What best delights my appetite.

Haz. He that has
An ambition to be strangled in his sleep,
May tell his wife he loves another woman.

Wild. But I was not content with this. Because
The other wench was somewhat obstinate,
I must needs urge my wife to mollify
And mold her for my purpose.

Haz. And she consented ?

Wild. No, 'twould not do :
This went against her stomach, and we parted.

Haz. Next time you see her, look to be presented
With your mistress' nose for this. Dost think a woman
Can be so patient, to know her rival
I'th' same roof, and leave her eyes to see thee
Again ? I am sorry for thee.

Wild. I am confident
She dare not : but for all that, would I had
Been less particular.

Haz. Come, I love thee well ;
But not thy wit, to carry things no handsomer :
You must unravel again, and make your wife
Believe you did but try her.

Wild. Pr'ythee drop the subject ; don't set my teeth
on edge with talking so much about my wife. Can't not
see by my wry faces, that 'tis holding the phial to my
nose, after I have taken the physic. Pr'ythee no more
of her. Now tell me, what brought thee this way ?

Haz. I was going to meet old Barnacle.

Wild. Barnacle ! what can such opposites possibly do
together ? He wants you to beat somebody for him.

Haz. Faith, Jack, I have no superfluous valour to dis-
pose of—I have just enough to defend myself from the
impertinence of some, and the villainy of others.

Wild. A gamester by profession, Will, should be always
ready to draw his sword, as the circumstances of play and
the support of his honour may require it.

Haz. Yes, there are gamesters who are ever drawing
their

their swords to support their honour, and of consequence are for ever fighting.

Wild. And they find their account in't : for gentlemen in general had much rather submit to have their pockets picked, than run the risque of having their throats cut : but, pr'ythee, Hazard, how do you escape these fire-drakes ; for you are pretty open and direct in your censures upon 'em.

Haz. What will they get by quarrelling with me ? they know I dare fight, and that I hate a scoundrel ; and whenever madam Fortune is pleased to jilt, and strip me, I always fall upon her bullies ; and as they don't love fighting, for fighting sake, they call me an odd fellow, and let me alone.

Wild. Ha ! ha ! ha ! But to return to Barnacle——
What is become of that genius his nephew ?

Haz. Just now returned from college, as great a genius as he went——He has been exposing himself these two years at the university, in the characters of the rake and the scholar, and now is come up to make the same figure in town.

Wild. Is not he an insufferable blockhead ?

Haz. Yes, an insufferable blockhead ; but not absolutely ignorant. His tutor has got words into him without ideas ; so his folly and scholarship set one another off to a most ridiculous advantage.

Wild. What Greek and Latin he has, I suppose lies in his head, as his uncle's money does in the chest, without being of the least use to himself, or any body else.

Haz. You are mistaken, Sir ; his uncle will spare no expence to make his hopeful kinsman a fine gentleman.

Wild. Then the matter is out——He comes to bind him apprentice to you.

Haz. Your humble servant.

Wild. His debauchery will become him as little as his learning ; so that in time we shall see the hopeful youth not only contemptible but infamous.

Haz. Is not that the old gentleman yonder, coming this way.

Wild. It is indeed ; and therefore I shall leave you to your entertainment. Squeeze a few hundreds out of him if you can—I must back to my kinswoman—I can't rest

without her—Shall I see you at the old place this afternoon? [Exit Wild.]

Haz. You shall—I wish I could get this Penelope out of his hands. She's a charming girl, and though she has not quite money enough to be made a wife of, by one of no fortune, yet she has too many good qualities to be made a strumpet of, by such a fellow as Wilding—he will not succeed surely—What should be the business, that old Barnacle has desired my conference? 'tis not to lend me money sure—He's here.

Enter Barnacle.

Barn. Master Hazard!

Haz. I was coming to you, Sir.

Barn. I am fortunate to prevent so great a trouble; There is a business, Sir, wherein I must desire your favour.

Haz. Mine? Command it, Sir.

Barn. Nay, I'll be thankful too; [*Shewing a purse of money.*] I know you are

A gentleman.

Haz. That should incline you to think I am not mercenary.

Barn. I beseech you, Sir,
Mistake me not; rewards are due to virtues,
And honour must be cherished.

Haz. What's your purpose?
Pray clear my understanding.

Barn. To be plain, Sir,
You have a name i'th' town for a brave fellow.

Haz. How, Sir! you do not come to jeer me?

Barn. Patience, I mean you have the opinion
Of a valiant gentleman; one that dares
Fight and maintain your honour against odds.
The sword-men do acknowledge you; the bailiffs
Observe their distance; all the swaggering puffs
Strike their top-sails. I have heard them in the streets
Say—There goes daring Hazard; a man careless
Of wounds; and though he has not had the luck
To kill so many as another, dares
Fight with all them that have.

Haz. You have heard this?

Barn. And more, and more; mistake not,

I do

I do not all this while account you in
 The list of those are called the blades, that roar
 In brothels, and break windows, that swear dammees,
 ' To pay their debts; and march like walking armouries,
 ' With poinard, pistol, rapier, and battoon,'
 As they would murder all the king's liege people,
 And blow down streets: no, I repute you valiant
 Indeed, and honoured; and come now, without
 More ceremony, to desire your favour;
 Which, as you are a gentleman, I hope
 You'll not deny me.

Haz. Though your language
 Be something strange, yet because I think you dare not
 Intend me an abuse, I do not question it. —
 Pray to the point; I do not think you're come
 To have me be your second.

Barn. I am no fighter;
 Though I have seen a fence-school in my days,
 And cracked a cudgel; yet I come about
 A fighting business.

Haz. You would have me beat somebody for you.

Barn. Not so, noble Hazard: yet
 I come to intreat a valiant courtesy,
 Which I am willing to requite in money;
 I have brought gold to give you payment, Sir;
 'Tis a thing you may easily consent to,
 And 'twill oblige me ever.

Haz. Be particular.

Barn. Then thus; you are not ignorant I have a ne-
 phew, Sir.

Haz. You have so.

Barn. One that's like
 To be my heir; the only one of my name
 That's left: and one that may in time be made
 A pretty fellow.

Haz. Very well; proceed.

Barn. You know, or you imagine, that I have
 A pretty estate too.

Haz. Y'are held a main rich man, Sir;
 In money able to weigh down an alderman.

Barn. I have more than I shall spend, now I come
 close;

I would have this nephew of mine converse with gentlemen.

Haz. And he does so.

Barn. I'll not pinch him in's allowance ;
The university had almost spoiled him.

Haz. With what ?

Barn. With modesty ; a thing, you know,
Not here in fashion : but that's almost cured ;
I would allow him to be drunk ———

Haz. You may, Sir.

Barn. Or any thing, to speak him a gentleman.

Haz. With your favour, Sir, let me be bold a little
To interrupt you ; were not you a citizen ?

Barn. 'Tis confessed, Sir.

Haz. It being a thriving way,
A walk wherein you might direct your nephew,
Why d'ye not breed him so ?

Barn. I apprehend ;

And thus I satisfy you : we that had
Our breeding from a trade, cits as you call us,
Though we hate gentlemen ourselves, yet are
Ambitious to make all our children gentlemen :
In three generations they return again ;
We tor our children purchase land ; they brave it
I'th' country, beget children, and they sell ;
Grow poor, and send their sons up to be 'prentices :
There is a whirl in fate. The courtiers make
Us cuckolds ; mark, we wriggle into their
Estates ; poverty makes their children citizens,
Our sons cuckold them. A circular justice !
The world turns round. But once more to the purpose.

Haz. To your nephew.

Barn. This nephew of mine I do love dearly ;
He is all my care ; I would be loth to lose him ;
And to preserve him both in life and honour
I come to you.

Haz. Now you come to me indeed, Sir.

Barn. What shall I give you, Sir, to let him ———

Haz. What ?

Barn. Pray, be not angry.

Haz. By no means.

Barn.

Barn. There is no such security i'th' world;
I'll pay for't heartily.

Haz. For what?

Barn. What shall I give you, troth, and let him——

Haz. What?

Barn. Beat you, Sir.

Haz. How?

Barn. Nay, do not, Sir, mistake me: for although
I name it coarsely, I desire it should be
With your consent, not otherwise: my nephew
Is raw, and wants opinion; and the talk
Of such a thing, to have beat a gentleman
That all the town's afraid of, would be worth,
In's credit, heaven knows what! Alas, you cannot
Blame a kind uncle, to desire all means
To get his nephew fame, and keep him safe;
And this were such a way!

Haz. To have me beaten.

Barn. Y'are i'th' right; but do not misconceive me.
Under your favour, my intention is not
He should much hurt you: if you please to let him
Quarrel, or so, at tavern, or where else
You shall think fit; and throw a pottle-pot——

Haz. At my head?

Barn. Yes, or a bottle; still under your correction;
Only that some of your acquaintance, and
Gentlemen may take notice, that he dares
Affront you, and come off with honour handsomely.
Look, here's a hundred pieces! tell 'em i'th' ordinary;
'Th'are weight, upon my credit: play 'em not
Against light gold: this is the prologue to
My thanks; besides my nephew shall in private
Acknowledge himself beholden.

Haz. A hundred pieces! I want money.

Barn. Right.

Haz. You give me this to let your nephew beat me?

Barn. Pray, take me with ye; I do not mean he should
By beating hurt you dangerously. You may
Contrive the quarrel, so that he may draw
Some blood; or knock you o'er the pate, and so forth;
And come off bravely: this is all.

Haz. Well, Sir;

You do not mean, you say, he should endanger
My life or limbs; all you desire, if I
Mistake not, is to get your nephew credit;
'That being fleshed, he may walk securely, and be held
Valiant, by-gaining honour upon me.

Barn. You understand me right.

Haz. I'll put it up;

Pray send your nephew to me; we'll agree.

Barn. Agree, Sir? You must quarrel, and he must
Else 'tis no bargain. [beat you,

Haz. Not before

We have concluded how things shall be carried.

Barn. I must desire your secrecy, and——

Haz. Here's my hand.

Barn. And there's my money.

Haz. Your nephew shall be a blade.

Barn. Why there's ten pieces more, 'cause you come
So freely; I'll send him to you. [off

Haz. Do so; why this, if the dice favour me, may
bring all

My lands again. Be sure you send him; but
No words! for your nephew's credit.

Barn. Mum—I thank you heartily. [Exit.

Haz. Be there such things i'th' world? I'll first to the
tavern;

There I am staid for: Gentlemen, I come;

I'll be beat every day for such a sum. [Exit.

END of the FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

Enter Mrs. Wilding and the Page.

Mrs. WILDING.

WERE's your master, boy?

Page. I know not, Mistress.

Mrs. Wild. Come nearer, firrah; you are of your
'master's

Council

Council sometimes. Come, be true in what I shall desire, and I shall find a time for your reward.

Page. How d'ye mean, mistress?

We pages meet rewards of several natures :
This great man gives us gold, that lady gloves,
'T'other silk stockings, roses, garters : but
The lady and mistress whom we serve in ordinary,
Reserves another bounty for our closeness.

Mrs. Wild. I see you can be a wag ; be but just to me,

Page. As your looking-glass, [and secret—
That in your absence cannot be corrupted
To betray your complexion.

Mrs. Wild. What private mistresses does Master Wild-

Page. Who, my master ? [ing visit ?
Alas, forsooth ! d'ye think he lets me know ?

Mrs. Wild. Nay, nay, dissemble not.

Page. I hire a coach

Sometimes or so, but ride always i' the boot :
I look at nobody but the passengers.
I do not sit i' the same box at plays with them.
I wait at tavern, I confess, and so forth ;
And when he has supp'd, we must have time to eat too :
And what should I trouble my conscience
With being too officious till I am call'd for ?
'Tis true, he waits upon the ladies home ;
But 'tis so dark, I know not where they dwell ;
And the next day we have new ones, 'las ! mere strangers
To me, and I should be unmannerly
To catechize them. If now and then there be
Any superfluous, cast waiting-woman,
There be so many serving-men about her,
I cannot come to ask a question ;
And how should I know any thing ?

Mrs. Wild. I see you are old enough for vice.

Page. Alas, forsooth !

You know 'tis ill to do a thing that's wicked,
But 'twere a double sin to talk on't too,
If I were guilty ; beside, forsooth, I know
You would ne'er trust me again, if I should tell you.

Mrs. Wild. Thou art deceiv'd, it shall endear thee more.

Page. I must beseech you
To be excus'd. My master is my master ;

My

My feet are at your service, not my tongue :
I would not forfeit my honour for the world.

Mrs. Wild. Hence, thou old in villainy !
But 'tis in vain to chide. Leave me, and bid
Mistress Penelope come hither.

Page. Yes, forsooth—She is so frumpish. [Exit.

Mrs. Wild. I know not which way to begin. To me
He has betray'd he loves her. Here she is ;
Now to the trial.

Enter Penelope.

Pen. Will you be sad still, cousin ? Why d'ye grieve ?
Be kinder to yourself. Trust me, I weep,
When I am alone, for you.

Mrs. Wild. Sorrow and I
Are taking leave, I hope ; and these are only
Some drops after the cloud has wept its violence.
Were one thing finish'd, I should ne'er be sad more ;
And I cannot despair to know it done,
Since the effect depends upon your love.

Pen. My love ! 'Tis justice you command my service.
I would I were so happy.

Mrs. Wild. Make me so,
By your consent to my desire.

Pen. Pray, name it.

Mrs. Wild. I only ask your love ; pray, give it me.

Pen. My love ! Why do you mock my poor heart, which
Pours all it has upon you ? Y'are possess'd of that already.

Mrs. Wild. You examine not
The extent of my request ; for when you have
Given what I ask, your love, you must no more
Direct it as you please : the power's in me
How to dispose it.

Pen. And you shall for ever.
I have no passion that shall not know obedience to you.

Mrs. Wild. Your love, by gift
Made mine, I give my husband. Do you love him ?

Pen. I always did.

Mrs. Wild. But in a nearer way :
Love him as I do ?

Pen. I understand you not ; or if you do.
Suspect I cherish any lawless flame——

Mrs. Wild. Thou art too innocent ; be less, and do

An act to endear us both. I know he loves thee ;
Meet it, dear coz ; 'tis all I beg of thee.
I know you think it a most strange request ;
But it will make me fortunate.

Pen. Grief, I fear,
Hath made her wild—D'ye know what you desire ?

Mrs. Wild. Yes, that you love my husband. 'Modesty
' Will not allow me to discourse my wish
' In every circumstance.' But think how desperate
My wound is, that would have so strange a cure.
He'll love me then : and, trust me, I'll not study
Revenge, as other wives perhaps would do,
But thank thee : and indeed an act like this,
So full of love, with so much loss and shame too,
For mine and his sake, will deserve all duty.

Pen. I have no patience to hear more ; and could
I let in a thought you meant this earnest,
I should forget I knew you : but you cannot
Be fallen from so much goodness. I confess
I have no confidence in your husband's virtue ;
He has attempted me, but shall hope sooner
To leave a stain upon the sun, than bribe
Me to so foul a guilt. I have no life
Without my innocence ; and you cannot make
Yourself more miserable than to wish it from me.
Oh, do not lose the merit of your faith
And truth to him, tho' he forget himself,
By thinking to relieve yourself thus sinfully !
But sure you do but try me all this while.

Mrs. Wild. And I have found thee pure ; be still pre-
But he will straggle farther—— [serv'd so.

Pen. Cherish hope,
He rather will come back. Your tears and prayers
Cannot be lost.

Mrs. Wild. I charge thee, by thy love,
Yet be rul'd by me. I'll not be so wicked
To tempt thee in a thought shall blemish thee :
But as thou wouldst desire my peace, and his
Conversion, if his wantonness last with him,
Appear more tractable ; allow him so much
Favour, in smile and language, that he may not
Think it impossible to prevail at last.

Per.

Pen. This may engage him farther, and myself to a

Mrs. Wild. It shall work our happiness, [dishonour.

As I will manage things. 'Tis but to seem:

A look will cost thee nothing, nor a smile,

To make his hopes more pleasing. On my life,

Thou shalt be safe both in thy fame and person.

Will you do this for my sake?

Pen. I'll refuse no danger, if I suffer not in honour,
To do you any service.

Mrs. Wild. I have cast it
Already in my brain; but do not yet
Enquire my purpose. As his folly leads
Him to pursue you, let me know, and I'll
By fair degrees acquaint you with my plot,
Which, built on no foul ends, is like to prosper.
And see how aptly he presents himself—
Pr'ythee, seem kind, and leave the rest to me.
He shall not see me.

[Exit.

Enter Wilding.

Wild. How now, coz? Was that
My wife went off?

Pen. Yes, Sir.

Wild. Let her go. What said she to thee?

Pen. Nothing.

Wild. Thou art troubled!

Pen. Pray, to your knowledge, Sir, wherein have I
Done injury to you or her?

Wild. Has she abus'd thee?
I'll chastise her.

Pen. By no means, Sir—I steal away your heart,
And meet at stoll'n embraces.

Wild. Does she twit thee? I'll kick her like a foot-ball.
Say but the word.

Pen. By no means think upon't. I have forgiven her.
You sha'not, Sir, so much as frown upon her;
Pray, do not, as you love me. We must study
A more convenient revenge.

Wild. How is this?
I pr'ythee, if she has been peremptory,
Which was none of our articles, let me instruct thee
How we shall be reveng'd.

Pen. Sir, I acknowledge

The growth and expectation of my fortune
Is in your love ; and tho' I would not wrong her——
And yet, to have my innocence accus'd,
Is able to pervert it. Sir, your pardon ;
I have been passionate. Pray, love your wife.

Wild. No, no, I'll love thee ; indeed, indeed, I will.
Is she jealous ?

Pen. You know she has no cause.

Wild. Let us be wise, and give her cause : shall's, coz ?

Pen. Sir, if I be a trouble to your house,
Your breath shall soon discharge me. I had thought
The tie of blood might have gain'd some respect.

Wild. Discharge thee the house ! I'll discharge her,
And all her generation, thee excepted ;
And thou shalt do't thyself ; by this thou shalt. [*Kisses her.*
Ha ! she comes to with more freedom : this is better
Than if my wife had pleaded for me. [*Aside.*] Pen,
Thou shalt be mistress, wilt thou ? Come, thou shalt :
She's fit for drudgery.

Pen. Oh, do not say so !

Wild. Then I wo't not. But I love thee for thy spirit,
'Cause thou wilt be reveng'd. Punish her jealousy
The right way : when 'tis done, I would chuse
To tell her ; it may kick up her heels another way.

Pen. Tell her what ? You make me blush.

Wild. No, no, I'll tell nobody ; by this hand, I will
not. [*Kisses it.*] Stay, stay, I have a diamond will be-
come this finger : 'tis in my drawer above ; I'll fetch it
straight.

Pen. Oh, by no means !

Wild. 'Tis thine, 'tis thine, my girl ! my soul is thine !
[*Exit.*]

Pen. Indeed, Mrs. Wilding, this is going a little too
far for you—There is something so like reality in all I
have been doing, that I am more than half in a fever with
it already. This playing with fire is a very foolish thing ;
but, tho' I burn my fingers, I must go thro' with it.

Enter Wilding with a ring.

Wild. Here it is, Pen, as sparkling as thyself. Wear
it, and let my wife stare out her eyes upon't.

Pen. I wo't not take't on such conditions.

Wild.

Wild. Take it on any, take it on any—
She's come about.

[*Aside.*

Enter Page.

Page. Sir, Master Hazard desires your company at the tavern: he says there are none but gentlemen of your acquaintance, Mr. Careless, Mr. Littlestock, and Mr. Sellaway.

Wild. He must excuse me—Get you gone.

Pen. Stay, stay, boy—As you love me, go, Sir—Your master will come. [*Exit Page.*] Have no suspicions that I wish your absence. I'll wear your gift, and study to be grateful.

Wild. I'll leave my boy behind; and should my wife be set on gossiping this afternoon, pretend thou, girl, some slight indisposition to keep at home; and when she's gone, let me but know it, and I'll leave the happiest run of dice to catch a moment with thee.

Pen. I want not such strong proofs of your regard; I will not stop your fortune.

Wild. Then I'll not leave you now.

Pen. You must, indeed you must—When I can oblige you, I shall not prove ungrateful. [*Exit.*

Wild. Both wind and tide are for me!—No talk now of wife's consent; I'll not remove my siege—When I can oblige you—Oh, 'twas sweetly spoken! She is my own! I have her sure, quite sure!—Now to the tavern, and drink to the purpose. [*Exit.*

SCENE, the Tavern.

Hazard, Careless, Littlestock, Sellaway, and Drawer,
discovered.

Haz. More wine.

Acc. Right, noble Hazard; here's to thee.

Haz. Let it come, boy; fill it me steeples high; I am in the vein of mirth, and I ha' cause, as you shall see in due time, gentlemen. Mr. Littlestock, thou art dreaming o' the dice.

Sell. He's melancholy.

Litt. Who, I?

Haz. I'll play the farrier, then, and drench thee for the fullens. A health to all our mistresses; we have had them single, let's shuffle them now together. [*Drinks.*]

Come, let us join a little music to our wine, and if his melancholy stands them both, I'll lay all the money in my pocket, which is no small sum, that he has a two-penny cord about him, and will make use of it before to-morrow morning. Come, Tom, I'll give you the gamester's apology, and if these are only qualms of conscience, this song will warm him like a dram.

S O N G.

I.

Ye youths of this town,
Who roam up and down,
To eat and to dress all your aim ;
Be not squeamish or nice
To make friends of the dice,
All the world plays the best of the game.

II.

See how each profession
And trade thro' the nation
Will dupe all they can without shame :
Then why should not we
In our turn be as free ?
All the world plays the best of the game.

III.

The lawyers of note
Will squabble and quote,
And learnedly plead and declaim ;
Yet all is but trick
The poor client to nick,
For the law plays the best of the game.

IV.

To gain his base ends,
Each lover pretends
To talk of his darts and his flame,
By which he draws in
The poor maiden to sin,
Who is left with the worst of the game.

V.

The prudish coy maid,
 With hypocrisy's aid,
 To foolish fond man does the same :
 When the fool's in the net,
 The prude turns coquette,
 And her spouse has the worst of the game.

VI.

The patriots so loud,
 Who roar to the crowd,
 And mount to the summit of fame !
 Their mouths soon will shut,
 Then they shuffle and cut,
 And at court play the best of the game.

VII.

The heroes so stout,
 At home make a rout,
 And swear the proud foe they will tame ;
 But alter their tones
 When they think of their bones,
 And for them play the best of the game.

VIII.

Then since the great plan
 Is cheat as cheat can,
 Pray, think not my notions to blame ;
 In country and town,
 From courtier to clown,
 All the world plays the best of the game.

Sell. 'Tis joyous, faith !

Haz. I wonder Jack Wilding stays——He's come in the nick.

Enter Wilding.

Wild. Save you, save you, gallants ; may a man come i' the rear ?

Haz. Give him his garnish.

Wild. Y'are not prisoners for the reckoning, I hope ?

Haz. For the reckoning !—Now, ye are all together, gentlemen, I'll shew you a wonder. But come not too near ;

near; keep out o' the circle. Whatsoever you think on't, this is a hundred pounds—Nay, not so close; these pictures do shew best at distance, gentlemen. You see it—*Presto.* [*Puts it up.*]

Wild. Nay, let's see it again.

Haz. Like to your cunning juggler, I ne'er shew my trick but once. You may hear more hereafter. What think you of this, Mr. Acreless, Mr. Littlestock, and Mr. Sellaway?

Acr. We do not believe 'tis gold.

Haz. Perish then in your infidelity.

Wild. Let me but touch it.

Haz. It will endure, take my word for it. Look you, for your satisfactions—No gloves off—you have devices to defalck—Preserve your talons and your talents, till you meet with more convenient gamesters.

Litt. How can'st by it?

Wild. Thou'dst little or none this morning.

Haz. I have bought it, gentlemen; and you, in a mist, shall see what I paid for it. Thou hast not drank yet, Wilding: [*lets!*]

Ne'er fear the reck'ning, man—More wine, you var-

Wild. But hark thee, hark thee, Will, didst win it?

Haz. No; but I may lose it ere I go to bed. Dost think't shall musty? What's a hundred pounds?

Sell. A miracle! But they are ceas'd with me.

Acr. And me too. Come, let's drink.

Wild. No matter how it came, Will: I congratulate Thy fortune, and will quit thee now with good News of myself. My cuz, I told thee of, Is wheel'd about: she has took a ring of me. We kiss'd and talk'd time out o' mind.

Haz. I know it:

My almanack says 'tis a good day to woo in;
Confirm'd by Erra Pater, that honest Jew, too.
I'll pledge thee.

Enter Drawer.

Draw. Mr. Hazard, there are two gentlemen below enquire for you; and, Mr. Wilding, this note for you.

Wild. For me!

Haz. What kind of men are they?

Draw. One's somewhat ancient; I heard him call The other nephew.

Wild. *Victoria! Victoria!* Will, a summons from the island of love—my wife's absent, and Pen and I shall toy away an hour, without fear or molestation.

Haz. Have a care, Jack; I love pleasure as well as thou; but to obtain it at the expence of every virtue, is rather paying too dear for it.

Wild. What, a moralizing gamester! Ha, ha, ha, 'tis envy, Will, attacks thee in the shape of conscience; and was I like the foolish dog in the fable, to catch at the shadow, and drop my tit bit, thou wouldst be the first to snap it up—but I have not time to laugh at thee—I must away—the wench calls, and I must fly. [*Exit.*]

Haz. This affair perplexes me—How little do we know of women! had I had fortune enough to have ventured upon marriage, I would have fixed upon this cousin of his, preferable to the whole sex; but the devil is in them, and will peep out one time or other—I don't know why, but I am vexed at this affair—I'll never go to Wilding's house again.

Enter Drawer.

Draw. Mr. Hazard, the gentlemen without are impatient to see you.

Haz. I beg their pardon, I had forgot them. I do caution you, gentlemen, beforehand, to be fair conditioned; one of them, the nephew, is of a fiery constitution, and sensible of any affront; let this character prepare him for you.

Acr. Bring him not hither.

Haz. There is a necessity in it; I would not for a hundred pound but entertain him, now he knows I am here. [*Exit.*]

Sell. Why must we keep company with his disagreeable acquaintance?

Enter Hazard again; with Barnacle, his Nephew, and Dwindle.

Acr. This is old Barnacle.

Lit. And that's his nephew; I have been in his company.

Sell. Is this the youth Hazard prepared us for? How busy they are!

Haz. You could not wish better opportunity:

These

These are all gentlemen of quality.
 I'll call him cousin first, if it please you,
 To endear him to their acquaintance.

Bar. I'll not be a witness of your passages myself;
 these will report as much as I desire. Sir, if you be
 beaten, I am satisfied.

Neph. But d'ye hear, uncle, are you sure you have made
 Your bargain wisely? They may cut my throat
 When you are gone; and what are you the wiser?
 Dwindle, be you close to me.

Haz. I warrant you, we shall do things with discretion,
 If he has but grace to look and talk courageously.

Bar. He may be valiant for aught I know;
 Howsoever, this will be a secure way
 To have him thought so, if he beat you soundly.

Neph. I do not like the company;
 But I have drank wine too, and that's the best on't;
 We may quarrel on even terms. Look to't, Dwindle.

Dwin. Here's your safeguard. [*Shewing his stick.*]

Haz. As I am a gentleman—be confident——
 I'll wait on you down, Sir.

Bar. By no means; let him beat you to purpose, Sir.

Haz. Depend upon me.

Bar. And when he has beat you, Sir, I must beg another favour.

Haz. Oh, command me, Sir.

Par. Courage, you know, not only keeps the men in awe,
 but makes the women admire.

Haz. What, must I pimp for your nephew too?

Bar. Lack-a-day! No, no, no; though I'll let him
 have his swing too—but I must marry him forthwith;
 and I have one in my eye, that will fit him to a tittle.

Haz. Who is the happy creature you have destined
 for him?

Bar. No less a jewel, I assure you, than your friend's
 ward, Penelope; there's money and beauty enough!
 Will you put in a word for him?

Haz. Both to the lady, and my friend, and immediately too.

Bar. Only to clear the way a little, Mr. Hazard; I
 have a tongue myself, and can use it too, when once it
 is set a going.

Haz. I have heard of you at the hall.

Bar. Nay, and my nephew can speech it too; ay, and has your rapparees too, when he's a little in drink, and he shan't want for that.

Haz. You're in the right, master Barnacle, not to let the hinges rust for want of a little oiling.

Bar. I have another use for you, if you'll introduce
us.

Haz. I'll do it.

Bar. But don't forget to be beaten though.

Haz. Do you suspect my honour?

Bar. I don't, I don't—Well, nephew, mind your hits—Mr. Hazard, yours—I am full of joy!—and, nephew, draw blood, do you hear? [Exit.

Neph. Bye, uncle.

Haz. Come, Sir: pray, gentlemen, bid my kinsman welcome; a spark that will demand your friendship.

Sell. His kinsman!—You are welcome.

Acc. He has power to command your welcome.

Litt. If I mistake not, I have had the happiness to have been in your company before now.

Neph. Mine, Sir?—D'ye hear, what if I quarrelled
[Aside to Hazard.

With him first? 'twill prepare me the better.

Haz. Do as you please; that's without my conditions.

Neph. I'll but give him now and then a touch; I'll close

Well enough, I warrant you—You been in my Company, Sir?

Litt. Yes, and at the tavern.

Neph. I paid the reck'ning then.

Litt. You came into our room—

Neph. Tell me of coming into your room!

I'll come again. You are a superfluous gentleman.

Litt. How's this?

Haz. Let him alone.

Litt. Sir, remember yourself.

Neph. I'll remember what I please, and forget what I remember. Tell me of a reck'ning! What is't? I'll pay't; no man shall make an ass of me, Farther than I list. I care not a fiddle-stick For any man's thund'ring; he that affronts

Me,

Me, is the son of a worm, and his father a whore.

I care not a straw, nor a broken point
For you. If any man dare drink to me,
I won't go behind the door to pledge him.

Acr. Why, here's to you, Sir.

Neph. Why, there's to you, Sir. Twit me with coming into a room! I could find in my heart to throw a pottle-pot—I name nobody—I will kick any man down stairs, that cannot behave himself like a gentleman. None but a slave would offer to pay a reck'ning before me. Where's the drawer? There's a piece at all adventures. He that is my friend, I care not a rush; if any man be my enemy, he is an idle companion, and I honour him with all my heart

Sell. This is a precious humour. Is he used to these mistakes?

Litt. Your kinsman gives you privilege.

Neph. I desire no man's privilege: it skills not whether I be kin to any man living.

Haz. Nay, nay, cousin, pray let me persuade you.

Neph. You persuade me! for what acquaintance?
Mind your busiuefs, and speak with your taylor.

Haz. An' you be thus rude——

Neph. Rude, Sir! What then, Sir?—Hold me, Dwindle.

Sell. Nay, nay, Will, we bear with him for your sake; He is your kinsman.

Haz. I am calm again.
Cousin, I am sorry any person here
Hath given you offence.

Neph. Perhaps, Sir, you
Have given me offence. I do not fear you.
I have knock'd as round a fellow in my days.

Haz. And may again——

Sell. Be knock'd! A pox upon him; I know not what to make of him.

Haz. Let me speak a word in private, Sir.

Neph. I can be as private as you, Sir.

Haz. Strike me a box o'th' ear presently. [Aside.

Neph. There's my hand on't— [Strikes him.

Sell. Nay, nay, gentlemen——

Acr. Mr. Hazard——

Neph.

Neph. Let him call me to account; the reck'ning's paid.

Come, Dwindle,—*Veni, vidi, vici.* Huzza! [*Exit.*]

Sell. The fellow's mad. Does he often mistake thus?

Haz. His courage is a little hard mouthed; it runs away with him now and then; we must exchange a thrust or two; after bleeding he'll be cool.

Sell. The youth has a mind to shew himself; he is just launched into life.

Litt. He'll be soon launched out of it again, if he goes on in this way.

Haz. Pr'ythee let's have no more of him; I shall undertake to cure his fever—But, harkee, friends, shall we meet at the old place this evening?

Sell. By all means; there will be deep play, I hear—my water mark is but low; but I'll go as deep as I can. Will not Wilding be of our party too?

Haz. No, no; he has a love-matter upon his hands; but should he hear the rattling of the dice, it will bring him from the arms of the finest woman in the kingdom.

Sel. Pooh, pooh! you carry this too far.

Haz. I know him in this particular better than you; when he is in the circle of the gaming-table, 'tis all magic, he has not power to move; and I challenge the devil to bait his hook with a stronger temptation to draw him out of it.

Lit. Besides, among ourselves, what was once with him occasional pleasure, is now become a necessary occupation. Jack Wilding has made a large gap in the widow's jointure.

Haz. Pshaw! rot your gossiping, don't abuse the generous wine you have been drinking, by mixing such scandal as this with it—stay till you get with your mistresses over their ratafia, and when you're maudlin, open the sluices of slander; however, we'll try the experiment; I'll meet you in the evening, and we'll write to him from the field of battle, and see to which his courage most inclines.

Acrc. From love to gaming we'll his heart entice,
But woman will prevail—

Haz.——I say the dice.

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT

A C T III.

Enter Wilding and Penelope.

WILDING.

THIS humour does become thee ; I knew when
 Thou didst consider what was offer'd thee,
 Thy fullenness would shake off. Now thou look'st
 Fresher than morning ; in thy melancholy,
 Thy clothes became thee not.

Pen. Y'are i'th' right ;
 I blam'd my taylor for't ; but I find now,
 The fault was in my countenance. Would we had
 Some music ; I could dance now ; la, la, la.

[Sings and dances.]

Wild. Excellent ! what a time shall I have on't ?
 Zounds, I am all on fire : how she glides !
 Thou wot not fail, Pen ?

Pen. This night——*Wild.* At the hour of twelve.

Pen. But you must be as punctual i'th' conditions,
 For my vow's sake ; not speak a syllable.

Wild. I'll rather cut my tongue out than offend thee ;
 Kissing is no language.

Pen. If it be not too loud ;
 We must not be seen together, to avoid
 Suspicion ; I would not for a world my cousin
 Should know on't.

Wild. She shall die in ignorance.*Pen.* No light, I charge you.

Wild. The devil shall not see us
 With his sawcer eyes ; ' and if he stumble in
 ' The dark, there sha'not be a stone i'th' chamber
 ' To strike out fire with 's horns.' All things shall be
 So close, no lightning shall peep in upon us.
 Oh, how I long for midnight !

Pen. I have a scruple.*Wild.* Oh, by no means, no scruples now.

Pen. When you
 Have you desires upon me, you will soon
 Grow cold in your affection, and neglect me.

Wild.

Wild. Why, hang me if I do, I'll love thee ever ;
 I have cast already, to preserve thy honour ;
 Thou shalt be married in a fortnight, cuz ;
 Let me alone to find thee out a husband
 Handsome and fit enough ; we will love then too.

Pen. When I am married ?

Wild. Without fear, or wit ;
Cum privilegio, when thou hast a husband ;
 Dost think I will forsake thee, Pen ? 'twere pity
 O' my life, sweet—I shall love thee the better ;
 And I must tell thee——

'Tis my ambition to make a cuckold,
 The only pleasure o'th' world ; that imagination
 Sweetens the rest, and I do love it mainly, mainly.

Pen. 'Tis double fin.

Wild. 'Tis treble pleasure, wench ;
 But we lose time, and may endanger thus
 My wife into a jealousy, if she see us.
 Farewel, farewel, dear Pen ; at night remember ;
 I wo'not lose my sport for half an empire !

Pen. Oh, my fears, your wife's return'd.

Wild. The devil she is ! What shall we do, Pen ?

Pen. I'll retire—but seem you more kind to her, lest
 her suspicions should betray us.

Wild. I will do any thing—I have a holiday in my
 heart—away, away.

[*Exit Pen.*]

Enter Mrs. Wilding.

Mrs. Wild. What, Mr. Wilding, so soon returned—
 with smiles upon your face too—this is unusual ; what
 has happened, pray ?

Wild. Why faith, wife, I have been reflecting on my
 conduct towards thee, and could I but hope you would
 forget my past behaviour, your life to come should be
 all sunshine.

Mrs. Wild. Is not this change too sudden to be cer-
 tain ? What has caused it, pray ?

Wild. Conscience, conscience, my dear—though va-
 nity and pleasure lulled it for a time, it has now awaked
 with all its stings, and shewn me all thy virtues, and my
 errors.

Mrs. Wild. Pray heaven that I am awake, for this is
 so like a dream.

Wild.

Wild. Don't you be an infidel, wife, and reject the good now that is offered you. I tell you I'm another man; I am converted—when did you see me before with such pleasure in my face?

Mrs. Wild. Not this many a day—Has our cousin Penelope, husband, helped forward this conversion?—If she has, I am greatly obliged to her.

Wild. You are, indeed, wife, much obliged to her; she has done all in her power, I can assure you.

Mrs. Wild. Was not she here with you, at my coming in?

Wild. Yes, yes, she was here—she was indeed—was here with me—I have opened my mind to her—and with much zeal and friendship to you, she has confirmed me in my new faith.

Mrs. Wild. How much I am bound to her!

Wild. You are, indeed, wife: you have not a better friend in the world, I can tell you that—Now, what do you want?

Enter Page.

Page. Some gentlemen are waiting for you at the old place, and desire your company.

Mrs. Wild. You may tell them, that your master has forsaken his old haunts; he has seen the folly of them, and retires—

[Servant going.]

Wild. Hold, hold, wife—such a message as this will make us the talk of the town; *I won't be too particular*; I will steal myself gently from my friends and pleasures, and rather wean, than tear myself from them—Let them know I will attend them.

[Exit Servant.]

Mrs. Wild. As you please—Farewel, my penitent.

Wild. Farewel, my prudence—Had not this message come luckily to my assistance, my hypocrisy had been out of breath, and the devil had peeped out, in spite of all the pains I had taken to conceal it.

[Aside.]

[Exit Wild.]

Enter Penelope.

Pen. How have I enjoyed his confusion! faith, cousin, you acted it bravely.

Mrs. Wild. I am sorry that I am forced to dissemble.

Pen. The best of us can, and must, upon proper occasions.

Mrs.

Mrs. Wild. Thou hast hit my instructions excellently.

Pen. I have made work for somebody—you have put me upon a desperate service; if you do not relieve me, I am finely served.

Mrs. Wild. All has succeeded to my wish; thy place I will supply to-night; if he observe all the conditions, I may deceive my husband into kindness, and we both live to reward thee better—Oh, dear cuz, take heed, by my example, upon whom thou placest thy affections.

Pen. Indeed, my dear, you take this too deeply; my life for it, but we shall reclaim him at last.

Mrs. Wild. That I almost despair of; and not so much from his total disregard of me, and his pursuit of other women, as from his uncontrollable passion for gaming.

Pen. He has understanding with all his frailties; and when those violent, irregular inclinations have had their scope, they must return to you.

Mrs. Wild. The passion of gaming, my dear, is not to be conquered even by the best understandings; it is an absolute whirlpool; wit, sense, love, friendship, and every virtue, are merely leaves and straws, that float upon the surface of the tide; which, as they approach this gulf, are all drawn in, and sink to the bottom, as if they had never been.

Enter Hazard.

Pen. Master Hazard—

Haz. Save you, Mrs. Wilding.

Mrs. Wild. You are welcome, Sir.

Pen. He is a handsome gentleman.

[*Aside.*

Haz. Gone abroad?

Mrs. Wild. This moment left us, and as I thought to meet you, and his other sober friends.

Haz. I called upon him to attend him.

Mrs. Wild. The servant shall overtake him, and bring him back to you.

Haz. 'Tis too much trouble.

Mrs. Wild. What! for the best friend of the best of husbands! you wrong me, Sir. [Exit Mrs. Wild.

Haz. Thou art the best of women, I am sure—Ha! this is the very gentlewoman!—in good time—Now for my promise to old Barnacle—I'll accost her—What

a pity it is, this wench should be a morsel for that glutton, Wilding? *[Aside.]*

Pen. What a pity it is, this fellow should be a gamester, and companion of my modest guardian?—How he eyes me! *[Aside.]*

Haz. Your name is Penelope, I take it, lady?

Pen. If you take it, I hope you will give it me again.

Haz. What again?

Pen. My name.

Haz. Would not you change it, if you could?

Pen. For the better, surely.

Haz. Wilt thou dispose of thyself?

Pen. Can you tell me of any honest man, whom I may trust myself with?

Haz. I'll tell thee a hundred.

Pen. Take heed what you say, Sir,—a hundred honest men! why, if there were so many in the city, 'twere enough to forfeit their charter—but, perhaps, you live in the suburbs.

Haz. This wench will jeer me. *[Aside.]*

Pen. I hope you are not one, Sir.

Haz. One of what?

Pen. One of those honest men you talked of so, to whom a maiden might intrust herself?

Haz. You have hit me, lady; come, I'll give thee counsel; and more, I'll help thee to a chapman too.

Pen. Alas! no chapmen now-a-days. Gentlemen are such strange creatures, 'so infinitely cold, and so void of 'every passion,' that a handsome woman cannot reach their pity—Why have you this 'so strange' antipathy to us? To what end will gentlemen come, if this frost holds?

Haz. You are witty; but I suppose you have no cause of such complaint—though some men may want warmth, there is no general winter; and if I guess aright, you'll never be frost-nipt, lady—at least you may prevent it.

Pen. Are you acquainted with any knight errants, who would succour a distress'd damsel?

Haz. Yes, I know of one—ay, and a bold one too, that dares adventure with you; ray, will take you for better and for worse.

Pen. And is he young too?

D

Haz.

Haz. Oh, very young?

Pen. And wife?

Haz. Not over wife.

Pen. Yourself, belike.

Haz. Indeed, not over-wise, I must confess; nor yet so witlefs, lady.

Pen. Who is the hero? Is he of your school? Is it from you that he has learned to travel the fashionable road? Can he drink, dice, roar, rake and royster? scour the streets a-nights, draw forth his valour, which the bottle gives him, upon the feeble watch, *but flies when danger comes?* or is he one of those delicate superfine thin-spun animals, who vegetate indeed, but don't live; who, having refined away all taste and sensibility, stalk about at public places, with their eyes half shut and their mouths open, among a circle of the finest women, without hearing, seeing, tasting, understanding, or feeling any thing.

Haz. Hold, hold: you'll never get a husband, lady, if thus you let your tongue out-run your wit.

Pen. Is he to get then? I thought that he was ready caught, and you had brought him in a cage.

Haz. Will you accept him?

Pen. What in a poke? unseen, untry'd? Has the youth no name?

Haz. Ay, and a weighty one—'tis Barnacle; young, rich and handsome.

Pen. Was this at his intreaty, or your own kind charity?

Haz. Lookee, lady, lose not time in questions—husbands are not so plenty—Will you have him?

Pen. I thank you for your goodness, Sir, and would advise you, if you have more of these commodities, to take them to another market—I am supplied already—and so your servant. [Exit.]

Haz. Gad-a-mercy! thou art a girl of spirit; supplied already? What can she mean?—not Wilding sure!—Impossible!—There is something about her, that bespeaks her honest—I know not what to make of her—she may be a tumbler for all this.

Enter Page.

Page. My master, Sir, will be at the appointment as soon

soon as possible—he must call at his banker's first, and then he'll attend you. *[Exit.]*

Haz. 'Tis well. This Penelope has touched me strangely——She is certainly——but what's that to me? I'll go, and drown thought at the gaming-table. *[Exit.]*

SCENE, *a Room in a Tavern.*

Enter Sellaway and Box-Keeper.

Sell. Was my message delivered to Wilding?

Box. Yes, Sir; he will certainly attend you.

Sell. What gamesters have you within?

Box. The old set, Sir.

Sell. What, no strangers?

Box. A country gentleman or two.

Sell. Will they make sport, think'st thou?

Box. The black-legs are about them: if they are full of feathers (as I believe they are) we shall have good picking.

Sell. Well, do you set them a-going, and I'll be among 'em presently. *[Exit Box-Keeper.]*

Enter Hazard.

You are late, Hazard.

Haz. I could not come sooner; but don't you lose time—I must write a note, and will be with you at the table presently. *[Exit Sell.]*

What is the meaning, I can't tell; but it hurts me to think that this foolish girl should so easily hearken to the lewd call of this fellow Wilding—this abandon'd, unfeeling fellow! Perhaps 'tis his vanity—I did not perceive, 'till she was in danger, that the agreeable jade had given me any concern. What is the reason, that to be eminently vicious is the readiest road to a woman's heart; nay, even to the best of 'em? But I'll rattle this nonsense out of my head; I have a hundred in my pocket and the dice are set a dancing. I'll strike up among 'em, and drown reflection——What, Wilding!

Enter Wilding.

Wild. Yes, you rogue, 'tis Wilding; the happy, gay, rapturous Wilding! Wish me joy, joy, man!

Haz. What is your wife dead?

Wild. No, but my mistress is kind, which is very near as good a thing.

Haz. Thou art not mad?

Wild. No, no ; but I swell with imagination, Like a tall ship bound for the fortunate islands ; Top and top-gallant, my flags, and my figaries Upon me, with a lusty gale of wind, Able to rend my sails ; I shall o'er-run And sink thy little bark of understanding, In my career ; I fly before the wind, boy.

Haz. Pray Heaven rather You do not spring a leak, and forfeit your Ballast, my confident man of war ; I Have known as stout a ship been cast away In sight o'th' harbour.

Wild. The wench, the wench, boy !

Haz. The vessel you have been chasing —

Wild. Has struck sail ;

Is come in ; and cries, Aboard, my new lord of The Mediterranean. We are agreed : This is the precious night, Will ; twelve the hour, That I must take possession of all, all, You rogue you !

Haz. Pr'ythee descend from thy raptures, for the gamesters are now coming, and we lose time.

Wild. The house fills apace. What are these, ha ?

Haz. Young Barnacle, and the vinegar-bottle his man ; he has business of much import with you ; he would be your rival with Penelope.

Wild. And may, if he pleases, when I have made her fit for him. If I have the first glass, he shall take the rest of the bottle, and welcome. But are you in earnest ?

Haz. Pr'ythee talk to him, and hear his overtures— He may be worth your listening to. I'll to the table— if I win, I shall have no cause to repent my bargain with him ; if I lose, by these hilts, I'll make him the cause, and beat him. Pr'ythee keep him from me a few minutes, and then I'll relieve thee.

Wild. But how shall I do it ?

Haz. Tell him any whimsical tale ; he is so absurd, that it will go glibly down.

Wild. I'll try his swallow then.

Haz.

Haz. Then luck with a hundred pieces ! [*Exit.*

Wild. I must get a fool for her, and if this will bite, he is already got to my hands.

[*Takes a news-paper out of his pocket.*

Enter Nephew and Dwindle.

Neph. Dwindle, that gentleman there is the guardian to the lady that I am to be in love with. Should not I shew away to him, and astonish him with a little learning, eh, Dwindle ?

Dwin. Do, Sir ; let off a little Greek at him, and I warrant he'll be proud to call you cousin.

Neph. I am a little out of Greek at present, Dwindle ; but for Latin, history, and philosophy—What is he reading, Dwindle ?

Dwin. Ask him, Sir.

Neph. *Quem librum legis, domine ?*

Wild. Have you any commands with me, Sir ?

Neph. Pray, Sir, what news is abroad these bad times ?

Wild. Bad times, Sir ! when were we so great, so good, or so magnanimous ? our ancestors were children to us ; our exploits croud so thick upon us, that we are obliged to send for the largest pyramid that can be got in Egypt, to write 'em down upon, for the benefit of posterity—and I am now calculating what it will cost to bring it over.

Neph. A handsome penny, I warrant you. He's upon his fun, Dwindle, but I'll humour him. Where is the pyramid to be put, Sir ?

Wild. Upon Dover cliff, Sir ; and the side facing the French coast is to be wrote in phosphorus, which will be read in the dark winter nights as far as Paris, with the same ease that you see what a clock it is by St. Paul's, at noon day.

Neph. Harkee, Dwindle, this is very curious.

Dwin. Too curious to be true.

Neph. Have you any more news, Sir ? if you have, pray impart—I have a great appetite for news—vouchsafe me another slice.

Wild. A meal if you please—be there no more gentlemen to hear ? 'Tis extraordinary fine news, in black and white, from *terra incognita*.

Neph. *Terra incognita!* What, has it no name?

Wild. It had, Sir, but it is ashamed of it.

Neph. But what are they doing there?

Wild. Nothing at all—'tis inhabited by a nation without heads.

Neph. Without heads! Where are their eyes then?

Wild. They lost them first, Sir, then their heads; and they say the distemper, if not stopped, will spread over the rest of their body.

Neph. O wonderful! a gentleman would not chuse to travel there. How can they know one another without their heads, Sir?

Wild. They don't; they are so changed, Sir, they are neither known by themselves or other people; having no heads, Sir, they are continually playing at blindman's buff, for the diversion of their neighbours.

Neph. *Monstrum! horrendum! informe! ingens! cui lumen ademptum—*ha! ha! ha! *Are there no politicians there?*

Wild. *Did not I tell you it was a nation without heads? all, all politicians.*

Neph. *Qui capit ille facit.* I know your meaning; your jest is not thrown away upon me.

Wild. Ha! ha! extremely good; apt and witty?

Dwin. Now is your time—to him, Sir.

Neph. I should be proud, Sir, to have some nearer connections with a gentleman of your learning, and profound erudition.

Wild. I should be happy to know how, Sir, and proud to be your friend and servant, in the true sense of the words.

Neph. Dwindle, my affairs are in a fine way. In every sense, I am your humble servant *in secula seculorum*. You must know, Sir——

Wild. I'll know it by and by, if you please, for we are interrupted; let us sport away a few pounds at the table, and then I'll go to the tavern and be at your service *in secula seculorum*. [Exit.

Neph. Come along, Dwindle; if my fortune goes on as swimmingly as she has begun, I shall make a rare night on't. If I get my mistress, and fill my pockets, we'll be as drunk as lords. Come along, Dwindle. [Exeunt.

SCENE

SCENE *draws, and discovers the gaming-table. Gamsters at play; after some time, and calling different mains,*

Enter Littlestock and Acreles.

Litt. A curse upon those reeling dice ! that last in
and in

Was out of way ten pieces. Canst lend me any
Money ? How have the dice dealt with thee ?

Acre. Lost, lost—I defy thee. If my luck recover not,
I must be sober to-morrow. Damn'd, damn'd fortune !

Litt. Oh, for a hundred, and all made now.

Enter Sellaway.

Sell. Yonder's Hazard wins tyrannically, without
Mercy : he came in but with a hundred pieces.

Litt. I'll get a fancy presently.

Acre. And how thrive the bones with his lordship ?

Sell. His lordship's bones are not well fet ; they are
maliciously bent against him ; they will run him quite
out of all.

*Box-keeper calls again several mains ; and after some war-
play, and much money is won and lost,*

Enter Nephew and Dwindle.

Neph. More money ! Dwindle, call my uncle. I must
have it for my honour : two hundred pieces more will
serve my turn : in the mean time, I will play away, for
want of cash, some superfluous things about me.

Dwin. By that time you are come to your shirt, I shall
be with you.

Sell. He's blown up too.

[*Exit Dwin.*

Enter Hazard.

Haz. So, so, the dice in two or three such nights will
be out of my debt ; and I may live to be a landlord
again.

Sell. You are Fortune's minion, Hazard. [not

Haz. You would seem to be no fool, because she doats
Upon you. Gentlemen, I must take my chance ; 'twas
A lucky hundred pound ! Jack Wilding !

Enter Wilding, gnawing a box.

What, eating the boxes ? [ney, Will ;

Wild. Chewing the cud a little ; I have lost all my mo-
Thou

Thou hast made a fortunate night on't : wo't play
No more ?

Haz. 'Tis the first time I had the grace
To give off a winner—I would not tempt the dice.

Wild. What hast won ?

Haz. You do not hear me complain ;
I have not been so warm these ten weeks.

Enter Acrelefs.

Wild. 'Tis frost in my pockets.

Acre. Master Hazard, I was afraid you had been gone ;
there's a fresh gamester come in, with his pockets full of
gold : he dazzles the gamesters, and no man has stock to
play with him.

Wild. The devil ! What is he ?

Acre. A merchant he seems ; he may be worth your
return.

Haz. Not for the exchange to-night, I am resolved.

Wild. Temptation ! now have I an infinite itch to this
merchant's pieces.

Haz. Thou wo't venture again then ?

Wild. I would if I could—but what do I forget ? the
wench, the fairy at home expects me.

Haz. I had forgot too : you wo't play now ?

Wild. 'Tis now upon the time. [*Looking at his watch.*
Curs'd misfortune !

Haz. You will not stay then ?

Wild. Hum—I ha' lost my money, and may recover a
pretty wench. Which hand ? This wantonness ; this
covetousness ; money is the heavier. Will, dost hear ?
I'll requite thy courtesy—lend me two hundred pounds
to attack the merchant, and I will give thee good interest,
and the best security.

Haz. What the dice and your old luck, Jack ?

Wild. No, damn the dice—I will give it thee upon
Pen's fortune ; she is so loving that I can command her,
and her's.

Haz. No matter for her fortune, I'll be contented
with less ; pay me with the girl herself.

Wild. How do you mean ?

Haz. I'll be contented with her personal security.

Wild. Pr'ythee be plain ; I am in haste, and every
rattle of the dice makes my heart beat to be at the mer-
chant.

chant. What would'tt have ? I'll agree to any thing, every thing—

Haz. The wench at home expects you.

Wild. Well——

Haz. Let me supply thy place.

Wild. Ha !

Haz. And here are the two hundred pieces.

Wild. What ! no—no——

Haz. Nay, then your servant. [*Going.*]

Wild. Stay, Will—Now, now the devil is at work with me—he has thrown out two baits, and I know not which to strike at.

Haz. I must take my money home——Yours, Jack, yours— [*Going.*]

Wild. Stay, stay, thou shalt, Will——I love thee for thy generosity—Gold is a real good, woman an imaginary one—Besides, a losing gamester will make but a cool lover ; thou art warmed with success, and deservest her—She will be mine another time. Thou shalt have her.

Haz. Shall I ?

Wild. Yes.

Haz. Done.

Wild. And done.

Haz. There are bills for your money.

Wild. To-morrow you'll thank me for't. Be secret, she'll never know thee, for our conditions are to [*Whispers him.*] neither light, nor——and she must need conceive 'tis I. Here's my key—It conducts you up the back way into the house—The servants are in bed, the first door on the right hand in the gallery leads to her apartment.

Haz. Are you in earnest ?

Wild. Have you wit to apprehend the courtesy ?
Let me alone ; the wench and I shall meet
Hereafter, and be merry : take my key—
The merchant's money cools : away ; be wise,
And keep conditions : I must to the gamester ;
Farewel ; remember not to speak a word.

Haz. What, kiss and tell ; O, fie for shame.

Wild. Success to thee, Will.

Haz. And to thee, Jack. [*Exeunt severally.*
Enter]

Enter Mrs. Wilding and Penelope, with candles.

Pen. I wish it may answer your purpose.

Mrs. Wild. I cannot lose any thing by the trial; the scheme is an innocent one, and if I can but rouse my husband a little from his lethargy to the least sense of shame, who knows what may happen?

Pen. Hark!—are you sure you heard nothing?

Mrs. Wild. Nothing but your maid going to bed.

Pen. Not come yet!—It is past the time too——'Tis very strange.

Mrs. Wild. Indeed, my dear Pen, this lover of yours is most terribly unpolite.

Pen. My vanity is a little mortified at it, I must confess——A fine gallant, indeed!

Mrs. Wild. You see, child, this gaming! it destroys every other passion, good or bad——And what hopes, think you, have I to draw him from the spell, when even you, Penelope, with all your charms, cannot break the enchantment?

Pen. Who knows but there may be some better way to account for his stay? Why may not his conscience and his reason together have debated this matter a little seriously, and tho' they have been tolerably pliant heretofore, may grow resty at a crime of this nature.

Mrs. Wild. Come, come, let us not flatter ourselves too far: his reason and conscience are at present very good friends with his passions, and attend him with great alacrity in all his parties of pleasure.

Pen. Hark! I am sure I hear him.

Mrs. Wild. Indeed you are mistaken; 'tis your pride now that fancies so——Don't imagine that he'll cast a single thought upon you, while he has a single guinea in his pocket.

Pen. Ay, ay, that's your jealousy, cousin——But I know——Upon my word I hear him——Indeed I do——Hark! he's now unlocking the door.

Mrs. Wild. No, no——Hush——You are in the right——I hear my thief—he's coming the back way——Take the candles into your chamber, and be ready to come in at the signal. Bless me, how frightened I am!

Pen. Are you, my dear? Then do you take my part, and I'll take yours.

Mrs. Wild.

Mrs. Wild. Get you gone, you fool; I am not in a condition to trifle. I have more at stake than you imagine. [*Exit Penelope with candles.*] Now for it. I wish it was over. [*Sighs and retires.*]

Enter Hazard.

Haz. I thought I never should have got hither. But where I am I can neither feel nor tell. And, now I am here, I could almost wish myself back again. I have some qualms about this business; and were I not afraid of being laughed at, I would certainly return. But, thanks to the spirit of the times, gentlemen are much less afraid of being profligate than ridiculous. [*Feeling about.*]

Mrs. Wild. He has certainly been drinking, by his muttering so to himself. Now to catch my spark——
Hem, hem!

Haz. There she is, and all my fears are fled——Hem, hem!

[*They approach, and when they meet he offers to kiss her.*]

Mrs. Wild. How violent he is! I have not had such a favour from him these two years. [*Aside.*]

Haz. How modest we are! [*She stamps.*]

Enter Penelope with lights.

What's the matter? Ha! a light——

Who have we got here? We are discover'd.

Mrs. Wild. Discover'd! ha! [*Screams.*] Who are you?

Pen. What's the matter here?

Haz. Mrs. Wilding!

Mrs. Wild. Mr. Hazard!

Pen. Your servant, good folks! [*Curtseying.*] What, my good cousin and Mr. Hazard at hide and seek in the gallery, in my guardian's absence. You are a most generous gentleman indeed! you are for providing every way, I see, for distressed ladies.

Mrs. Wild. For Heaven's sake, Mr. Hazard, how got you here?

Haz. Upon my soul, Madam, I scarce can tell you.

Mrs. Wild. You have squeezed my fingers most unmercifully.

Pen. So, so!

Haz. Upon my soul, Madam, it was all a mistake. My errand at present was not with you, but with that lady.

Pen.

Pen. With me ! What business, pray ? To pinch my fingers ?

Haz. Here are my credentials. [*Shows a key.*] I was only to act by deputation from a certain friend of mine.

Pen. Which I suppose is a certain good guardian of mine.

Mrs. Wild. And who is most certainly my virtuous husband.

Haz. I am so astonished, I hardly know whether I am awake.

Pen. To be sure !—You unlock people's doors, get into their houses, seize upon their wives, and all in your sleep.

Haz. Ladies, tho' I may, perhaps, suffer in your opinions by my silence, yet I could wish, for my friend's sake, my own, and yours, that you would give me your pardon, and peaceably send me about my business ; for indeed I am most sincerely ashamed and sorry.

Pen. Poor modest gentleman !—Had a housebreaker been caught in the fact, he would have made just the same apology. But no pardon from me, without a free and full confession.

Mrs. Wild. I can say nothing, Mr. Hazard, in your justification ; but if you have a mind to make all the amends in your power, you will join with me in a plot I have just now thought of : for though Mr. Wilding may not have love enough to be jealous of me, I know he has too much pride to be easy, if he thought I was false to him ; and what must he feel when he believes me innocently so, and knows himself to be the cause of it ?

Pen. I adore you, my dear Mrs. Wilding, for the thought. I long to be revenged of him for his base design upon me ; and, now you have him in your power, if you don't torment him thoroughly, I'll never forgive you as long as I live.

Mrs. Wild. Let me alone for that. Mr. Hazard has only to behave as if he had succeeded in his design upon you. But let us confer notes together below stairs.

Haz. Ladies, you shall command my life, and my best services.

Pen. Best and worst, they are always ready, I'll say that for Mr. Hazard.

Haz.

Haz. Indeed, lady, you know but half of me.

Pen. The worst half——

Haz. I fear so; but let me assure you both, that with all my frailties, I am much happier in forwarding this scheme of virtue, than I should have been in the success of my folly.

Pen. *Do you believe him?*

Mrs. Wild. I am confident of it. Don't mind her, Mr. Hazard, but follow me.

Pen. *Mr. Hazard.*

Haz. *Madam!*

Pen. The devil was sick, the devil a monk would be;
The devil was well, the devil a monk was he.

[*Exeunt.*

END of the THIRD ACT.

A C T IV.

SCENE, Wilding's House.

Enter Mrs. Wilding and Barnacle.

BARNACLE.

BUT has not Master Hazard in no wise opened his business to you, lady, your husband, or your fair cousin? I had his promise for it.

Mrs. Wild. What business, good Sir? I pray you, speak——This interruption is unfortunate. [*Aside.*

Bar. Thus then; I have, lady, a longing, as it were, to be more nearly connected with your family. You must needs know what I would say.

Mrs. Wild. Indeed I am no scholar, and this is all Greek to me.

Bar. My nephew understands Greek, lady; ay, and Latin too, and geography, and poetry, and philosophy; and is withal as valiant——

Mrs. Wild. 'Tis the peculiar blessing of the times; our young men are so learned and brave, and our old ones so wise and virtuous, that we are the astonishment of the

E

whole

whole world. 'Tis the golden age, Sir. But your business.

Bar. Vouchsafe me, lady, one plain answer to an honest question—Has your fair kinswoman, the beauteous Penelope, yet transferred her affections to any one happy mortal?

Mrs. Wild. If she had not, would Mr. Barnacle become a purchaser?

Bar. Me, Madam! No, no, no! Alas, alas! my dancing days are over!—But for my nephew—Oh, that nephew of mine! You have seen him, and heard of him, surely, have you not, Madam?

Mrs. Wild. My mind, of late, Mr. Barnacle, has had little attention, but to its own troubles.

Bar. Alack, alack, I know it well! You are much discoursed of, and pitied by the world: and I'll be bold to say, if there be any man that troubles you, or any that you would have talked withal, let him be who he will, I'll rid you of that care. He that shall offer to disturb you but in a thought, do you mark me, Madam? I'll take an order with him——

Mrs. Wild. What will you do, Sir?

Bar. Don't mistake me; I'll do nothing——But I'll fend my nephew. He shall work him, and jerk him, I warrant you. You don't know how my nephew is improved since he came from the university: he is a perfect knight-errant, the very St. George for England!—Why, Madam, he has had a pluck at the very flower of chivalry, ay, and cropped it too; the very Donzel del Phebo of the time; and all the roaring blades lower their top-sails to him. I'll say no more—Name but the man whom you but frown upon, and I'll fend my nephew to him.

Mrs. Wild. I thank you, Sir; I have no enemy to exercise his prowess upon; my discontents are known to flow from a nearer person—I am ashamed to say——

Bar. Your husband—Say but the word, and I'll fend my nephew to him; and were he ten husbands he should mollify him. Don't spare him. Had you but seen him baffle a 'squire this morning!

Mrs. Wild. These praises of your nephew, Mr. Barnacle, are thrown away upon me; 'tis my cousin must be

be warmed with them; and here she comes—So I shall leave your eloquence to present the flower of chivalry to her, which I think would be an ornament to the fairest bosom in the kingdom.

Bar. Madam, you do my nephew honour; and when you are in the humour to have any man beaten, either in your own family or in the kingdom—I'll send my nephew to him.

Enter Penelope.

Mrs. Wild. Dear Pen, dispatch this old fool as fast as you can, and in the mean time I'll dispatch my page to fetch my wandering turtle home. [Exit.]

Bar. Fair lady, I am your servant. [Bows.]

Pen. Good Sir, I am yours. [Curtsies.]

Bar. I fear my visit may offend.

Pen. I am but ill at ease, indeed, Sir, and most unfit for company.

Bar. What, so young and melancholy! Oh, 'tis a pity!

Pen. It is indeed, and yet I am melancholy.

Bar. And for what, fair lady?

Pen. For a gentleman—What would you have a fair lady melancholy for?

Bar. I'll send my nephew to him——

Pen. To bring him to me?

Bar. Ay, bring him, and swing him, if you desire it. You can make him do any thing, Madam. Say you but the word and he'll take the Great Turk by the whiskers—Oh, my nephew is a pretty fellow! Don't you know him, Madam?

Pen. Not I, Sir.

Bar. Not know my nephew! I'll send him to you.

Pen. What to do, Sir?

Bar. He shall do any thing. The town's afraid of him.

Pen. Oh, pray, keep him from me then!

Bar. He'll hurt no woman. But for the men——

Pen. Can he make 'em better, Sir? If he could, we should be much obliged to him.

Bar. And he shall, lady.

Pen. Then let it be quickly; for I'll stay till they are mended, before I think of a husband.

Bar. What think you, sweet lady, of the hero himself?

Pen. My thoughts must not run after such costly fruit.

Bar. My nephew is dying for you.

Pen. Poor young man!—But if we were both dying, my guardian would see us at our last gaspings before he'd consent.

Bar. Would he? Then my nephew shall talk to him. Let him alone to get the consent.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Your nephew, Sir, is below, and begs to be admitted to the idol of his affections.

Pen. Shew the gentleman up. *[Exit Serv.]*

Bar. Idol of his affections! There's an expression for you!—My nephew is a fine scholar and a great hero. Here he is. I shall leave you together. Your servant, Madam.

Enter Nephew and Dwindle.

To her, nephew; now is your time. I have cleared the way; she is your own; you'll have a fine reception. I am glad to see you are half drunk—Be bold and conquer.

[Exit Bar.]

Neph. Ne'er fear me, uncle; when I am rocky, I defy any woman in Christendom. I have not been in bed to-night. When I am bosky, I never flinch.

Dwin. To her, to her, Sir.

Neph. Shall I attack her with a little learning, Dwindle? If I could but put her into confusion, the town's my own.

Dwin. Give her a broadside then.

Neph. I had rather beat the watch than talk to her—My courage fails me, Dwindle.

Pen. I must send this fool a packing. *[Aside.]* Do you trust yourself abroad, Sir, without your uncle? You are very young, and there are a great many coaches and carts in this metropolis.

Neph. Coaches and carts, Dwindle! I am dumb, *et vox faucibus hæsit.*

Dwin. Give her one fire first.

Neph. I had rather go back again, Dwindle. *[Going.]*

Dwin. What, turn your back upon the enemy!

Neph. I can't face her, *per deos immortales.*

Pen. If you have any matter to communicate, let me beg to know it immediately, for I am in haste.

Neph. I had much matter to communicate, but your coaches and carts have drove it quite out of my head.

Pen.

Pen. Poor gentleman ! When you have recovered your senses, and the use of your tongue, return to me again, and I shall be at your service ; in the mean time, I would recommend a gentle nap to you ; and I'll pay a visit to my monkey : and so, Sir, your servant. *[Exit.*

Neph. This is a fine reception, truly, Dwindle !

Dwin. So, so, Sir.

Neph. I am in a damn'd passion, Dwindle. I'll go and kick her monkey.

Dwin. Leave that to me, Sir, and I'll do his business.

Neph. But this must not pass so. What does my uncle mean, and Mr. Wilding mean, by sending me here to be laughed at ? If I meet 'em, woe betide 'em. I am so full, that unless I have some vent I shall burst. Don't speak to me, Dwindle, or I shall certainly fall upon you. Oh, for a man, woman, or child now ! — I must beat something. *[Exit.*

SCENE, *the Street.*

Enter Hazard and Wilding.

Wild. How now, Will ! Thou look'st desperately this morning. Did'st sleep well to-night ?

Haz. Do not enquire, but curse yourself till noon, I am charitable, I do not bid thee hang thyself ; and yet, I have cause to thank thee. I would not have lost the turn for all the money I won last night — Such a delicious theft ! —

Wild. I think so.

Haz. I found it so, and dare make my affidavit.

Wild. Thou didst not see her ?

Haz. Nor speak to her. To what purpose ?

Wild. Now do I
Grow melancholy.

Haz. If thou dost envy me,
There is some reason for't ; thou dost imagine
I have had pleasure in my days ; but never,
Never so sweet a skirmish ! Not a kiss,
But had Elysium in't.

Wild. I was a rascal.

Haz. If thou didst know but half so much as I,
Or couldst imagine it, thou wouldst acknowledge
Thyself worse than a rascal on record.

Wild. Hold your tongue.

Haz. I have not words t' express, how soft, how bounteous
How every thing a man with full desires
Could wish a lady. [teous

Wild. Pr'ythee, be quiet. But tell me, Will——

Haz. Don't question me farther.

It is too much happiness to remember :

I am sorry I have said so much.

Wild. Was I not curs'd,

To lose my money and such delicate sport ?

Haz. But that I love thee well, shouldst ne'er enjoy

Wild. Why ? [her.

Haz. I would almost cut thy throat.

Wild. You would not.

Haz. But take her ; and if thou part'st with her one
night more for less than both the Indies, thou'lt lose by
her. She has paid me for my service ; I ask nothing else.

Wild. If she be such a precious morsel, Will,
I think you may be satisfied.

Haz. Take heed,

And understand thyself a little better.

I think you may be satisfied—With what ?

A handsome wench ! 'Tis herself ; recant it ;

I never shall be satisfied.

Wild. You do not purpose

A new encounter.

Haz. For thy sake,

'Tis possible I may not : I would have

My game kept for me. What I have done, faith,

Was upon your entreaty ; if you have

'The like occasion hereafter, I

Should have a hard heart to deny thee, Jack.

Wild. Thou hast fir'd my blood !—That I could call
'To be possess'd of what my indiscretion [back time,

Gave up to thy enjoying ! But I am comforted,

She thinks 'twas I ; and we hereafter may

Be free in our delights—Now, Sir, the news

With you ?

Enter Page.

Page. My mistress did command my diligence
To find you out, and pray you come to speak with her.

Wild. When I am at leisure.

Page.

Page. 'Tis of consequence.

Wild. Is Penelope with her?

Page. Not when she sent me forth.

Shall I tell my mistress you will come to her?

Wild. How officious you are for your mistress, sirrah? What, said she I came not home all night?

Page. Nothing to me. But my eyes ne'er beheld her look so pleasantly.

Wild. Well, well, say I'll come. [Exit Page.

Haz. Now, farewell, Jack. I need not urge your secrecy touching your mistress—I must laugh at thee, and heartily, ha, ha, ha!—So, farewell, farewell, Jack, ha, ha, ha! [Exit.

Wild. To say the truth, I have shewed myself a coxcomb. A pox o' play, that made me double loser!—For aught I know, she may never admit me to such a turn again—and then I ha' punished myself ingeniously—Oh, fool, fool, fool! [Exit.

SCENE, Wilding's House.

Enter Mrs. Wilding and Penelope.

Mrs. Wild. Is he coming, say'st thou?

Pen. I saw him turn at the corner of the square.

Mrs. Wild. Is he alone?

Pen. Alone, and seems disordered: with his eyes upon the ground, and his arms folded thus, he walks by starts, and shews all is not right within.

Mrs. Wild. Now comes the trial—Hark! I hear him. You must away. Now for it. [Exit Pen.

Enter Wilding.

So, my good penitent man, I find your conscience was sincere; you have at last taken a farewell to your follies, but such dear friends you were, you took up all the night in parting.

Wild. I have bid farewell to them for ever. It was the last effort of expiring passion; but 'tis gone, and now I'm a new man—Heigho! [Sighs.

Mrs. Wild. Why do you sigh, husband? How d'ye, sweetheart?

[Smiling.

Wild. Well, but a little melancholy. [you. You look more sprightly, wife; something has pleas'd

Mrs. Wild. It has indeed; and if it be no stain

To

To modesty, I would enquire how you
Sped the last night.

Wild. I lost my money.

Mrs. Wild. I don't mean that.

[Smiling.]

Wild. Don't mean that?---I am not betray'd, I hope!
What do you mean?

Mrs. Wild. Y'are a fine gentleman!

Wild. 'Tis so; could she not keep her own counsel?

[Aside.]

Mrs. Wild. And have behav'd yourself most wittily,
And I may say most wrongfully: this will
Be much for your honour, when 'tis known.

Wild. What will be known?

Mrs. Wild. Do you not blush? Oh, fie!
Is there no modesty in man?

Wild. Riddle my riddle my re---Pox of your ambi-
guities: what would you have?---I would not yet seem
conscious.

Mrs. Wild. 'Tis time then to be plain; it was a wonder
I could be so long silent: did you like
Your last night's lodging?

Wild. Very, very well;
I went not to bed all night.

Mrs. Wild. Not to bed, all night!--Think again, my
dear---your mem'ry may fail you.

Wild. What do you mean?---I say I have not been in
bed to-night; and had you any eyes but jealous ones,
you'd see by mine I have not slept to-night.

Mrs. Wild. Look at me, husband.

Wild. So I do---there! there! there!--What mum-
mery's this?

Mrs. Wild. Now tell me---do you feel no small com-
punction at thus looking in my injured face?

Wild. A pox upon these stale expostulations; must I
ever be dinned with them? and can't my reformation
work a change in you?---thou art the strangest woman---I

Mrs. Wild. Soft, soft, my good husband---Did not you
meet Penelope last night?

Wild. No; I met no Penelope last night.

Mrs. Wild. And were you not to meet her?---Speak,
my dear.

Wild. Pr'ythee, let me alone, my head aches.

Mrs.

Mrs. Wild. No, no, 'tis my head that aches——Did you not pass the night, the live-long night, in wanton, stolen embraces?

Wild. Refuse me if I did.

Mrs. Wild. You did not lie with Mrs. Penelope, my kinswoman?

Wild. Cuckold me, if I did. I swear——

Mrs. Wild. Come, come, don't swear——but 'twas no fault of yours, no fault, no virtue——but this is no time to expostulate these actions——in brief, know 'twas my plot. [Smiling.

Wild. What plot?

Mrs. Wild. Yes, yes, my plot, my dear. [Smiling.

Wild. My plot, my dear! what do you smirk and giggle at?—Leave your idiot tricks, and tell me what you mean.

Mrs. Wild. You are so testy—but I shall please you.

Wild. Shall you? I wish you would——

Mrs. Wild. Thus then——I have with sorrow long observed which way your warm affection moved, and found it would be in vain with open power to oppose you; I therefore worked by stratagem——I got the secret of your meeting, and I wrought so with my honest cousin, to supply her wanton place, that with some shame, at last, I might deceive your hard heart into kindness.

Wild. That, that again, sweet wife; and be a little Serious---Was it your plot to excuse your cousin, And be the bedfellow?

Mrs. Wild. 'Twas indeed, my dear.

Wild. 'Twas in hell, my dear.

Mrs. Wild. Bless me!

Wild. I am fitted, fitted with a pair of horns Of my own making!

Mrs. Wild. What, do you take it thus? Should you not rather thank, and think upon That providence, that would not have you lost In such a forest of loose thoughts. Come, be Yourself again; I am your handmaid still; And have learn'd so much piety to conceal Whatever should dishonour you.

Wild. It buds——

It buds already! I shall turn stark mad——
Horn mad!——

58 THE GAMESTERS.

Mrs. Wild. What ails you? Are you vex'd
Because your wantonness has thriv'd so well?

Wild. Well with a vengeance! and did you really contrive the plot yourself?

Mrs. Wild. I did.

Wild. You lie---I contriv'd some part of it---and can you prove all this to be true?

Mrs. Wild. I can---witness those tender joys, which, though not meant for me---

Wild. Oh, damn your description!

I am satisfied.

[thanks.]

Mrs. Wild. You seem angry---I did expect your

Wild. Yes, I do thank you, thank you heartily;
Most infinitely thank you.

Mrs. Wild. Doth this merit

No other payment but your scorn? Then know,

Bad man, 'tis in my power to be reveng'd;

And what I had a resolution

Should sleep in silent darkness, now shall look

Day in the face; I'll publish to the world

How I am wrong'd, and with what stubbornness

You have despis'd the cure of your own fame;

Nor shall my cousin suffer in her honour.

I stoop as low as earth to shew my duty;

But too much trampled on, I rise to tell

The world, I am a woman.

Wild. No, no; hark you,

I do not mock you. I am taken with

The conceit; what a fine thing I have made myself?

Ne'er speak on't, thy device shall take; I'll love thee,

And kiss thee for't; thou'lt paid me handsomely:

An admirable plot, and follow'd cunningly.

Mrs. Wild. Then I'm happy, husband, if you're fin-

Wild. Oh, very sincere, and very happy.

[cere.]

Mrs. Wild. In earnest of that sincerity,

Vouchsafe the kiss you promised---

Wild. There---there.

[Kisses her.]

I'll see thee anon again; and lie with thee

To-night, without a stratagem. Penelope

Expects thee; keep all close; dear wife, no sentences.

[Hurries Mrs. Wild. off.]

I'm trick'd and trimm'd at my own charges rarely! [Ex.]

END of the FOURTH ACT.

ACT

THE GAMESTERS.



A C T V.

SCENE, *the Street.*

Enter Wilding.

WILDING.

I Am justly punish'd now for all my tricks,
And pride o'th' flesh ! I had ambition
To make men cuckolds ; now the devil has paid me,
Paid me i'th' same coin ; and I'll compare
My forehead with the broadest of my neighbours :
But, e'er it spreads too monstrous, I must have
Some plot upon this Hazard. He supposes
He has enjoy'd Penelope, and my trick's
To drive the opinion home, to get him marry her,
And make her satisfaction. The wench
Has oft commended him ; he may be won to't.
I never meant to part with all her portion :
Perhaps he'll thank me for the moiety ;
And this dispos'd on, she's conjur'd to silence.
It must be so.

Enter Hazard.

Haz. Jack Wilding, how is't, man ?
How goes the plow at home ? What says the lady
Guinever, that was humbled in your absence ?
You have the credit with her, all the glory :
What says she, Jack ? Does she not hide her eyes,
And blush, and cry, you are a fine gentleman !
Turn a-one side, or drop a handkerchief,
And stoop, and take occasion to leer
And laugh upon thee ?

Wild. Nothing less : I know not
What thou'st done to her, but she's very sad.

Haz. I'll be hanged then.

Wild. Thou must imagine,
I did the best to comfort her.

Haz. She's melancholy
For my absence, man : I'll keep her company
Again to-night.

Wild. And nothing now but sighs, and cries I have
Undone her.

Haz.

Haz. Ay, ay, the old cant---she's a fool.

Wild. To be plain,

Although she has no thought but I was her gallant,
You are the only argument of her sadness.

Haz. How can that be?

Wild. When I had merrily

Excus'd what had been done, she fetch'd a sigh,
And with some tears reveal'd her love to you;
That she had lov'd you long, but by this act
Of mine, d'ye mark? she was become unworthy
To hope so good a fortune; I cannot tell,
But she is strangely passionate.

Haz. For me?

Wild. Ay, for you.

Haz. Why, now I do recollect myself,
She has sometimes smil'd upon me.

Wild. Nay, believe it,

She is taken with thee above all the world.

Haz. And yet she was content you should—
'Bove all the world.

Wild. But 'twas your better fate
To be the man; it was her destiny
Contrived it thus---Thou art a gentleman,
And must consider the poor gentlewoman.

Haz. What would'st ha' me do?

Wild. Make her amends.

Haz. What do you mean?

Wild. Marry her.

Haz. Marry a strumpet!

Wild. You had first possession, and hadst thou married
earlier, thou couldst but have had her first; besides, none
know but we ourselves, and we, for weighty reasons,
must be secret.

Haz. Why, ay, that's true; but then for weightier
reasons, I must not marry her---

Wild. Come, come, thou hast a tender heart,
Heav'n knows! she may be desperate.

Haz. A fair riddance; we have enough o' th' tribe;
I am sorry I cannot furnish her expedition with a pair of
my own garters.

Wild. I know thou art more charitable; she may prove
a happy wife; what woman but has frailty?

Haz. Let her make the best on't; set up shop i'th' Strand or Westminster, she may have custom.

Wild. She has a portion will maintain her like a gentlewoman, and your wife.

Haz. Where is't?

Wild. In my possession; and I had rather thou Shouldst have it than another,

Haz. Thank you heartily.

A single life has single care; pray keep it.

Wild. Come, thou shalt know I love thee---thou shalt More by thousands, than I resolv'd [have

To part with, 'cause I would call thee cousin too;

Ten thousand pounds, Will, she has to her portion!

I hop'd to put her off with half the sum, [me,

That's truth;---some younger brother would have thank'd

And given me my *quictus*---Is't a match?

Haz. A pretty sum! Ten thousand pounds will make What's crooked, straight again.

Wild. Th'art in the right;
Or for the better sound, as the grammarians
Say, I will call it---fifty hundred pounds!

By'r lady, a pretty stock; enough, an' need be,

To buy up half the women in a county.

Haz. Here's my hand; I'll consider on't no farther;
Is she prepar'd?

Wild. Leave that to me.

Haz. No more.

Wild. I'll instantly about it.

Haz. Will you confirm this before witnesses?

Wild. Bring a hundred---bring them presently.

Haz. I'll follow you.

Wild. Now I'm a little easy---

The bitt'rest pill, when gilded, will be swallow'd.

[Exit Wild.

Haz. Ha, ha!

The project moves better than I expected;

What pains he takes out of his ignorance?

Enter Barnacle.

Bar. Oh! Sir, I am glad I ha' found you.

Haz. I was not lost.

Bar. My nephew, Sir, my nephew!

Haz. What of him?

P

Bar.

Bar. He's undone, he's undone! you have undone

Haz. What's the matter? [him.

Bar. You have made him, Sir, so valiant, I am afraid
He's not long liv'd: he quarrels now with every body:
And roars and domineers, and shakes the pent-houses.
What shall I do? I fear he will be kill'd:

I take a little privilege myself,
Because I threaten to disinherit him;
But nobody else dares talk, or meddle with him;
Is there no way to take him down again,
And make him coward?

Haz. There are ways to tame him.

Bar. Now I wish heartily you had beaten him
For the hundred pounds.

Haz. That may be done yet.

Bar. Is't not too late? But d'ye think 'twill humble
I expect every minute he's abroad [him?
To hear he has kill'd somebody, or receive him
Brought home with half his brains, or but one leg.

Haz. What would you have me do?

Bar. I'll pay you for't,
If you will beat him soundly, Sir, and leave him
But as you found him; for if he continue
A blade, and be not kill'd, he won't escape
The gallows long; and 'tis not for my honour
He should be hang'd.

Haz. I shall deserve as much
To allay this metal, as I did to quicken it.

Bar. Nay, 'tis my meaning to content you, Sir;
And I shall take it as a favour too,
If for the same price you made him valiant,
You will unblade him: here's the money, Sir;
As weighty gold as t'other: 'cause you should not
Lay it on lightly: break no limb, and bruise him
Three quarters dead, I care not: he may live
Many a fair day after it.

Haz. You shew
An uncle's love in this; trust me to cure
His valour.

Bar. He here's; do but observe,
Enter Nephew.

And beat him, Sir, accordingly.

Neph. How now, uncle?

Bar.

Bar. Thou art no nephew of mine, th'art a rascal!
 I'll be at no more charge to make thee a gentleman:
 Pay for your dice and drinkings; I shall have
 The surgeon's bills brought shortly home to me;
 Be troubled to bail thee from the sessions;
 And afterwards make friends to the recorder
 For a reprieve, yes---I will see thee hang'd first.

Neph. And be at the charge to paint the gallows too;
 If I have a mind, the waits shall play before me,
 And I'll be hang'd in state, three stories high, uncle:
 But first I'll cut your throat.

Bar. Bless me! defend me.

Enter Acreless, Sellaway, and Littlestock.

Acr. How now, what's the matter?

Sell. Master Barnacle!

Bar. There's an ungracious bird of mine own nest,
 Will murder me.

Litt. He wo't not sure?

Haz. Put up,
 And ask your uncle presently forgiveness;
 Or I will huff thee.

Neph. Huff me?--I will put up
 At thy intreaty.

Haz. Gentlemen, you remember
 This noble gallant.

Acr. Cousin of yours, I take it.

Haz. A fine cousin! He lent me in your company
 A box o'th' ear.

Neph. No, no, I gave it,
 I gave it freely; keep it, never think on't;
 I can make bold with thee another time;
 Would it had been twenty.

Haz. One's too much to keep.
 I am a gamester, and remember always
 My debts of honour---First, the principal---

[*Strikes him.*

And this for the use---

[*Strikes him again.*

Neph. Use! Would'st th'adst given it my uncle.

Haz. They have cost him already two hundred pounds
 And upwards, shotten herring, thing of noise!

Neph. Oh, for my man Dwindle,
 And his basket-hilt now! my uncle shall rue this.

Haz. Down, presently, and before these gentlemen;
Desire his pardon.

Neph. How! desire his pardon?

Haz. Do it I say.

Neph. I will ask his pardon; I beseech you, uncle---

Haz. And swear.

Neph. And do swear——

Haz. To be obedient, never more to quarrel.

Neph. Why, look you, gentlemen, I hope you are per-
By taking this so patiently, that I am [suaded,
Not over valiant.

Bar. I suspect him still.

Neph. Indeed you need not, uncle.

Haz. If ever he prove rebellious, in act
Or language, let me know it.

Neph. Will you not give
Me leave to roar abroad, a little, for my credit?

Bar. Never, firrah; now I'll tame you.
I thank you, gentlemen; command me for
This courtesy.

Neph. 'Tis possible I may
With less noise grow more valiant hereafter:
'Till then I am in all your debts.

Bar. Be rul'd,
And be my nephew again: this was my love,
My love, dear nephew.

Neph. If your love consist
In kicking, uncle, let me love you again.

Bar. Be silent, firrah.

Neph. I am dumb.

Acr. Then his uncle paid for't?

Haz. Heartily, heartily.

Whither are you going, gentlemen?

Acre. As you shall lead us, Hazard.

Haz. 'Tis lucky then;
Will you be witnesses to a desperate
Bargain I mean to drive within this hour?
No less than bartering for my liberty.

Sell. The devil! not to be married, sure?

Haz. 'Tis even so—and were I sure that this, my va-
liant friend [*To Neph.*] would not be angry at my choice,
I'd tell you who was the maid elect.

Neph.

Neph. Chuse where you list ; I'll ne'er be angry more, nor woo again ; I have had of both my *quantum sufficit*.

Haz. Her name's Penelope.

Neph. Take her, and welcome ; she'll pay you in the coin you've favour'd me with.

Bar. May you win and wear her, Mr. Hazard ; and since my nephew merits not the maid, I wish you and her happiness.

Haz. Thanks, Mr. Barnacle——I will away to Wilding's, and prepare for your reception——will you follow me ?

Litt. We will. [Exit Hazard.]

Bar. What say you, gentlemen ? shall we drink this couple in a glass of sack, and then to wish 'em joy ?

Acre. Agreed.

Neph. I'm for any thing. [Exeunt.]

SCENE, Wilding's House.

Enter Mrs. Wilding and Penelope.

Pen. Why, you would not have me encourage this Hazard ?

Mrs. Wild. Indeed but I would.

Pen. What a gamester ! a profligate ! No, no, thanks to youth, good spirits, and a tolerable person, not so desperate as that, Mrs. Wilding.

Mrs. Wild. His gaming is accidental——A younger brother, and bred to no business, naturally leads to the dice for his supplies. I know he is tired of the company he has kept ; his honour is as yet unimpeached, and with your fortune, what can either of you want, or desire farther ?

Pen. Indeed, I dare not think of it. And yet, cousin, you might persuade me to any thing. I have the highest opinion of you. Give me a little time——prejudices are hard to conquer, and yet who knows——Bless me ! he's here.

Enter Hazard.

Mrs. Wild. Mr. Hazard, I have pleaded hard for you, and promised much for you. You must now try the cause yourself.

Haz. I am indebted to you——all things succeed beyond your thought——pray give me a little opportunity with your kinswoman.

Mrs. Wild. I will withdraw.

[*Going.*]

Pen. Don't go without me cousin, you know I have business with you.

Mrs. Wild. And so has that gentleman, my dear; and he is in such haste, poor man! he can't stay: finish with him, and I'm at your service.

[*Exit.*]

Haz. I know not how to woo her——

Sweet lady——

Pen. Your pleasure, Sir?

Haz. Pray, let me ask you a question——

If you had lost your way, and met one,
A traveller like myself, that knew the coast
O'th' country, would you thank him to direct you?

Pen. That common manners would instruct.

Haz. I think so.

Pen. But there are many ways to the wood.

Haz. And which

Would you desire; the nearest path and safest,
Or that which leads about?

Pen. Without all question,
The nearest and safest.

Haz. Can you love then?

Pen. That is the nearest indeed. If you are upon that road, I could wish you would go a little about.

Haz. No, no, Madam; you have said, and I must have an answer.

Pen. You are in a violent hurry sure. What answer would you have, Sir?

Haz. A direct one. Can you love?

Pen. Pray give me a little time.

Haz. Not a moment. Can you love, I say?

Pen. I were a devil else.

Haz. And can you love a man?

Pen. Bless me! you frighten me out of my wits.
What did you say, Sir?

Haz. Can you love a man?

Pen. A man! what else, Sir!

Haz. Y'are so far on your way. Now love but me,
Y'are at your journey's end; what say you to me?

Pen. Nothing, Sir,

Haz. That's no answer; you must say something,

Pen. I wish you'd guess, and not compel me to speak.

Haz.

Haz. D'y' hear, lady ?
Setting this foolery aside, I know
You cannot chuse but love me.

Pen. Why ?

Haz. I have been told so.

Pen. You are easy of belief ;
I think I should be best acquainted with
My own thoughts, and I dare not be so desperate
To conclude.

Haz. Come, come ; y'are a dissembling gentlewoman.
I know your heart ; you have lov'd me a great while.
What should I play the fool for ? If you remember,
I urg'd some wild discourse in the behalf

Of Barnacle ; it was a trial of thee ; [virtue.
That humour made me love thee ; and since that, thy

Pen. Indeed, Sir ?

Haz. Indeed, Sir ? why, I have been contracted to thee.

Pen. The deuce you are ! How long ?

Haz. This half hour ; know thy portion, and shall

Pen. Strange ! [have it.

Haz. Nay, I'll have thee too,

Pen. You will ? *How can I help myself ?* [it so :

Haz. You cannot help it ; thy kind cousin will have
'Tis his own plot, to make thee amends ; is't not
Good mirth ? but 'tis not love to thee or me ;

But to have me possess he is no cuckold : [him :

I see through his device, thou art much beholden to

He meant to have put thee off with half thy portion ;

But that, as things have happen'd, we must keep secret.

Say, is't a match ? I have ten thousand pound too,

'Thank the dice : ' let's put our stocks together ;

We have love enough—happiness must follow.

Pen. Pray, stop, Sir ; we're at our journey's end.
My guardian's here.

Enter Wilding.

Wild. So close ! I am glad on't. This prepares Will
And my young cousin. A word, Penelope. [Hazard,

Haz. Now will he make all sure.

Wild. You us'd me coarsely,
But I have forgot it. What discourse have you
With this gentleman ?

Pen. Very strange discourse. He seems to be a suitor.

Wild.

Wild. Entertain him, d'y' hear ; you may do worse ;
Be rul'd.

'Twas in my thought to move it ; does he not
Talk strangely ?

Pen. I told you he did.

Wild. Was that all ?

Pen. What ?

Wild. Nothing. Let me counsel you
To love him ; call him husband.

Pen. I resolve
Never to marry without your consent, *since I have got my*
own. [Aside.] [They talk apart.]

Enter Acreless, Littlestock, and Sellaway.

Haz. Gentlemen, welcome.

Pen. If you bestow me, Sir, I will be confident
I am not lost ; I must confess I love him.

Wild. No more then ; lose no time. Kind gentlemen,
Y'are come most seasonably to be the witnesses
Of my consent. I have examin'd both
Your hearts, and freely give thee here my kinswoman :
No sooner shall the church pronounce
You married, but challenge what is hers.

Haz. Ten thousand pound.

Wild. I do confess it is her portion.
You sha'not stay to talk. Nay, gentlemen,
Pray see the business finish'd.

Acre. We'll attend him.

Wild. The lawyer with his papers are within ;
I've sign'd and seal'd the contract, and with it
Give up all my right and guardianship
To this my friend.

[To Haz.]

Haz. Which I with joy accept of——

Pen. And I for better and for worse.

Haz. Sweet Penelope, [Takes Pen. hand.]
Be you the witness. [Exit with Pen.]

Wild. So, so ; this will confirm him in the opinion,
Penelope was the creature he enjoyed,
And keep off all suspicion of my wife,
Who is still honest, in the imagination
That only I embrac'd her : all's secure,
And my brow's smooth again. Who can deride me,

But I myself? Ha! that's too much; I know it;
 And spite of these tricks, am a Cornelius.
 Cannot I bribe my conscience to be ignorant?
 Why then I ha' done nothing: yes, advanc'd
 The man, that grafted shame upon my forehead:
 Vexation! parted with ten thousand pound,
 And am no less a cuckold than before!
 Was I predestin'd to this shame and mockery?
 Where were my brains? Yet why am I impatient?
 Unless betray'd, he cannot reach the knowledge;
 And then no matter——yes, I am curst again:
 My torment multiplies; Penelope
 Will clear herself, and then that ruins all!
 I would she had been strumpeted. I am lost,
 And must be desperate——Kill him? No——my wife.
 Not so good——death is over black and horrid;
 And I am grown ridiculous to myself.
 I must do something.

Enter Barnacle and Nephew.

Bar. Master Wilding, welcome—I have not seen you
 a great while.

Wild. Then I have been happy a great while.
 Do you know me?

Bar. Know you?

Wild. They say I am much alter'd of late.

Bar. There is some alteration in your forehead.

Wild. My forehead!

Bar. 'Tis not smooth enough—you're troubled—Is
 your wife within?

Wild. What would you with her?

Bar. I know the matter that's a brewing.

Neph. Et ego.

Bar. You have it here, Mr. Wilding.

[Pointing to his head.]

Wild. The devil!——Do you see 'em
 Have they broke the surface?

Bar. I mean Mr. Hazard's business.

Wild. I mean that too. My head's a torment to me.

Neph. What would you give now, Mr. Wilding, to
 be of the nation without heads?

Wild. Would I could change conditions with these
 fools; they are not now troubled with being cuckolds.

Enter

Enter Mrs. Wilding.

Mrs. Wild. Gentlemen, your servant.

Bar. Joy, joy to you, Mrs. Wilding.

Wild. Wife, you are a whore ; you shall know more hereafter—I must go live in the forest.

Mrs. Wild. And I i'th' common.

Wild. She'll turn prostitute !

Enter Hazard, Penelope, Acreiefs, &c.

Haz. Your leave, gentlefolks ; who wishes us joy !

Bar. Married ?

Haz. Fast as the law can tie us ;
The priest must bless the knot.

Acre. We are witnesses.

Haz. Cousin, ten thousand pound ; and lady, now I must thank you for this among the rest. Look then with an eye of love upon me.

Wild. No matter, she'll love thee afterwards. An' she do not, she can but cuckold thee ; there be more i'th' parish, man.

Mrs. Wild. In our parish, husband ?

Wild. I'll be divorc'd now.

Wife, you're a whore.

Haz. Ho, there ! no big words ; come,
We must tell something in your ear : be merry ;
You are no cuckold, make no noise. I know
That's it offends your stomach.

Wild. Ha !

Haz. I touch'd not her, nor this, with one rude action.
We'll talk the circumstance another time :
Your wife expected you ; but when I came,
She had prepar'd a light, and her cousin here,
T' have made you blush, and chide you into honesty :
Seeing their chaste simplicity, I was won
To silence, which brought on my better fortune.

Wild. Can this be real ?

Mrs. Wild. By my hopes of peace
I'th' t'other world, you have no injury :
My plot was only to betray you to
Love and repentance.

Pen. Be not troubled, Sir ;
I am a witness of my cousin's truth ;
And hope you'll make all prosper, in renewing
Your faith to her.

Haz.

Haz. Be wise, and no more words :

Thou hast a treasure in thy wife ; make much on her.
For any act of mine, she is as chaste

As when she was new-born. Love, love her, Jack.

Wild. I am asham'd : pray give me all forgiveness :

I see my follies——Heaven invites me gently

To thy chaste bed. Be thou again my dearest :

Thy virtue shall instruct me. Joy to all.

Haz. These be love's miracle's : a spring-tide flow in every bosom.

Bar. May ease, health, happiness attend you, lady.

Pen. From you, Sir, 'tis a double compliment. Have I your pardon, Sir, for my refusal of the honour of your nephew's hand ?

Bar. You have.

Neph. And mine too, lady, with thanks to the bargain.

Wild. To-day I'll feast you all ; and, wife, be this our bridal day : let us begin new joys with these our happy cousins.

Mrs. Wild. My joys are at their full ; and, dear Penelope, my heart o'erflows with love, delight and gratitude.

Pen. May I deserve your friendship, and follow your example.

Haz. Be witness, gentlemen, that wedded here, wedded for ever, I no more shall follow that fickle harlot Fortune——I renounce my follies ; fly to peace, content and love.

From riot, care, intemperance and vice ;

And from the fountain head of all—the dice.

Sell The sinner preaches, Wilding ; but his lectures will make few penitents.

Wild. I'm sorry for't——

I own myself a convert to these truths,

And wish that you had felt 'em. This my pilot,

My prudent pilot, steers me safe thro' storms,

Thro' rocks and quick-sands, to a happier coast :

The syren's voice shall charm my ear no more ;

With joy I quit that treach'rous, fatal shore ;

Where a friend's ruin is by friends enjoy'd,

And ev'ry virtue is by turns destroy'd.

[*Exeunt.*]

END of the FIFTH ACT.

EPI-

E P I L O G U E,

Written by a FRIEND, and Spoken by Mrs. WILDING.

MY conduct now will every mind employ,
 And all my friends, I'm sure, will wish me joy:
 'Tis joy indeed, and fairly worth the cost,
 To've gain'd the wand'ring heart I once had lost.
 Hold, says the prudish dame, with scornful sneer,
 I must, sweet Madam, stop your high career;
 Where was your pride, your decency, your sense,
 To keep your husband in that strange suspense?
 For, my part, I abominate these scenes——
 No ends compensate for such odious means:
 To me, I'm sure---but 'tis not fit to utter——
 The very thought has put me in a flutter!

Odious, says Miss, of quick and forward parts;
 Had she done more, she'd given him his deserts:
 O, had the wretch but been a spark of mine,
 By Jove, I should have paid him in his coin.

Another critic ventures to declare,
 She thinks that cousin Pen has gone too far:
 Nay, surely, she has play'd a generous part;
 A fair dissembler, with an honest heart.
 Would any courtly dame in such a case,
 Solicit, get, and then resign the place?
 She knew, good girl, my husband's reformation,
 Was (what you'll scarce believe) my only passion:
 And when your scheme is good, and smart, and clever,
 Cousins have been convenient persons ever.
 With all your wisdom, Madam, cries a wit,
 Had Pen been false, you had been fairly bit:
 'Twas dangerous, sure, to tempt her youth with sin;
 The knowing-ones are often taken in:
 The truly good ne'er treat with indignation,
 A natural, unaffected, generous passion;
 But with an open, liberal praise, commend
 Those means which gain'd the honourable end.

Ye beauteous, happy fair, who know to bless,
 Warm'd by a mutual flame, this truth confess;
 That should we every various pleasure prove,
 There's nothing like the heart of him we love.







J. Roberts del.

Published for Bells British Theatre Feb: 1778.

Thornthwaite Sc

Miss P. HOPKINS in the Character of MISS NOTABLE
'I have been so abused!' so affronted!'

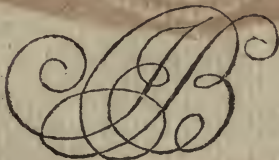
BELL'S EDITION.

THE
LADY'S LAST STAKE;
OR, THE
WIFE'S RESENTMENT.

A COMEDY,
As written by COLLEY CIBBER, Esq.

DISTINGUISHING ALSO THE
VARIATIONS OF THE THEATRE,
AS PERFORMED AT THE
Theatre-Royal in Dury-Lane.

Regulated from the Prompt-Book,
By PERMISSION of the MANAGERS,
By Mr. HOPKINS, Prompter.



L O N D O N :

Printed for JOHN BELL, near Exeter-Exchange, in the Strand.

MDCCLXXVIII.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

LIBRARY

1917

PAID BY THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

1917

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

LIBRARY

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

LIBRARY

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

LIBRARY

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

LIBRARY

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

LIBRARY

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

LIBRARY

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

LIBRARY

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

LIBRARY

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

TO THE MOST NOBLE THE

MARQUIS OF KENT,

Lord Chamberlain of her Majesty's Household, &c.

THE utmost success I ever proposed from this play, was, that it might reach the taste of a few good judges, and from thence plead a sort of a title to your Lordship's protection; and, if the most just and candid critics are not the greatest flatterers, I have not failed in my proposal. As for those gentlemen that thrust themselves forward upon the stage before a crowded audience, as if they resolved to play themselves, and save the actor the trouble of presenting them; they indeed, as they are above instruction, so they scorn to be diverted by it, and will as soon allow me a good voice as a genius. I did not intend it should entertain any, that never come with a design to sit out a play; and therefore, without being much mortified, am content such persons should dislike it. If I would have been less instructive, I might easily have had a louder, though not a more valuable applause. But I shall always prefer a fixed and general attention before the noisy roars of the gallery. A play without a just moral, is a poor and trivial undertaking; and it is from the success of such pieces, that Mr. Collier was furnished with an advantageous pretence of laying his unmerciful axe to the root of the stage. Gaming is a vice that has undone more innocent principles than any one folly that's in fashion, therefore I chose to expose it to the fair sex in its most hideous form, by reducing a woman of honour to stand the presumptuous addresses of a man, whom neither her virtue or inclination would let her have

the least taste to. Now 'tis not impossible but some man of fortune, who has a handsome lady, and a great deal of money to throw away, may, from this startling hint, think it worth his while to find his wife some less hazardous diversion. If that should ever happen, my end of writing this play is answered; and if it may boast of any favours from the town, I now must own they are entirely owing to your Lordship's protection of the theatre: for, without a union of the best actors, it must have been impossible for it to have received a tolerable justice in the performance.

The stage has for many years, till late, groaned under the greatest discouragements, which have been very much, if not wholly, owing to the mismanagement or avarice of those that have awkwardly governed it. Great sums have been ventured upon empty projects, and hopes of immoderate gains; and when those hopes have failed, the loss has been tyrannically deducted out of the actor's salary. And if your Lordship had not redeemed them, they were very near being wholly laid aside, or at least, the use of their labour was to be swallowed up, in the pretended merit of singing and dancing. I don't offer this as a reflection upon music, (for I allow and feel its charms) but it has been the misfortune of that, as well as poetry, to have been too long in the hands of those, whose taste and fancy are utterly insensible of their use and power. And though your Lordship foresaw, and experience tells us, that both diversions would be better encouraged under their separate endeavours, yet this was a scheme, that could never be beat into the impenetrable heads of those that might have honestly paid the labourers their hire, and put the profits of both into their own pockets. Nay, even the opera, though the town has neither grudged it pay nor equipage, from either the wilfulness or ignorance of the same general, we see, was not able to take the field till December.

My Lord, there is nothing difficult to a body of English people, when they are unanimous, and well commanded. And though your Lordship's tenderness of oppressing is so very just, that you have rather stayed to convince a man of your good intentions to him, than to do him even a service against his will: yet since your Lordship

ship has so happily begun the establishment of the separate diversions, we live in hope, that the same justice and resolution will still persuade you to go as successfully thro' with it.

But while any man is suffered to confound the industry and use of them, by acting publicly, in opposition to your Lordship's equal intentions, under a false and intricate pretence of not being able to comply with them; the town is likely to be more entertained with the private dissentions, than the public performance of either, and the actors in a perpetual fear and necessity of petitioning your Lordship every season for new relief.

To succour the distressed is the first mark of greatness, and your Lordship is eminently distinguished for a virtue that certainly claims the next place to it. The disinterested choice and manner of your Lordship's disposing places in your gift, are proofs that you always have the claims of merit under your first and tenderest consideration. And from the assurance of this thought, my Lord, the stage, the poets, and the players, lay their cause, their hopes, and utmost expectations at your Lordship's feet for support and protection.

I am,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most humble,

And most obedient servant,

COLLEY CIBBER.

Handwritten text, likely a letter or document, written in cursive script. The text is dense and covers most of the page, though it is significantly faded and difficult to read. It appears to be a formal or semi-formal communication, possibly a letter of introduction or a business document. The handwriting is consistent throughout, suggesting it was written by a single person.

Handwritten text at the bottom of the page, possibly a signature or a closing. It is less legible than the main body of text but appears to be a distinct section, perhaps a signature block or a postscript.

P R O L O G U E.

SINCE plays are but the mirrors of our lives,
 And soon or late mankind are chain'd to wives;
 Since those dissoluble fetters too, must be
 Our greatest happiness or misery;
 What subject ought, in reason, more to please ye,
 Than an attempt to make those chains fit easy?
 Though in the noose so many souls seem curst,
 Pray who's in fault? --- For when you've said your worst, }
 You all did feel it happiness --- at first.
 Therefore our author drew you once the life
 Of careless husband, and enduring wife,
 Who by her patience (though much out of fashion)
 Retriev'd, at last, her wanderer's inclination.
 Yet some there are, who still arraign the play,
 At her tame temper shock'd, as who should say ---
 The price, for a dull husband, was too much to pay.
 Had he been strangled sleeping, who should hurt ye?
 When so provok'd --- revenge had been a virtue.
 --- Well then --- to do his former moral right,
 Or set such measures in a fairer light,
 He gives you now a wife, he's sure, in fashion,
 Whose wrongs use modern means for reparation.
 No fool, that will her life in sufferings waste,
 But furious, proud, and insolently chaste;
 Who more in honour jealous, than in love,
 Resolves resentment shall her wrongs remove:
 Not to be cheated with his civil face,
 But scorns his falshood, and to prove him base, }
 Mobb'd up in hack triumphant dogs him to the place.
 These modish measures, we presume, you'll own,
 Are oft what wives of gallantry have done;
 But if their consequence should meet the curse
 Of making a provok'd aversion worse,
 Then you his former moral must allow,
 Or own the satire just he shews you now.
 Some other follies too, our scenes present,
 Some warn the fair from gaming, when extravagant.
 But when undone, you see the dreadful stake,
 That hard-press'd virtue is reduc'd to make;
 Think not the terrors you behold her in,
 Are rudely drawn i' expose what has been seen;
 But, as the friendly muse's tenderest way,
 To let her dangers warn you from the depth of play.

DRA-

D R A M A T I S P E R S O N Æ.

M E N.

Drury-Lane.

Lord <i>Wronglove</i> ,	-	-	Mr. Reddish.
Lord <i>George Brilliant</i> ,	-	-	Mr. Dodd.
Sir <i>Friendly Moral</i> ,	-	-	Mr. Aickin.
<i>Brush.</i>			

W O M E N.

Lady <i>Wronglove</i> ,	-	-	-	Mrs. Hopkins.
Lady <i>Gentle</i> ,	-	-	-	Miss Hopkins.
Mrs. <i>Conquest</i> ,	-	-	-	Mrs. Barry.
Miss <i>Notable</i> ,	-	-	-	Miss P. Hopkins.
Mrs. <i>Hartshorn.</i>				

THE
LADY'S LAST STAKE.

* * * The lines distinguished by inverted commas, 'thus,' are omitted in the representation.

ACT I.

SCENE, *Lord Wronglove's Apartment.*

Lord Wronglove alone, musing.

LORD WRONGLOVE:

MY wife—as abundance of other men of quality's wives are—is a miserable woman—ask her the reason, she'll tell you—husband: ask me, I say, wife—all's entirely owing to her own temper.

Enter Mrs. Hartshorn.

Mrs. Hartf. My Lady desires to know if your Lordship pleases to spare her the chariot this morning?

Lord W. Hah! That's as much as to say, I have a mind to guess when, and how you go out this morning.

[*Aside.*] Well, the chariot is at her service. [*Exit Hart.*]

This continual jealousy is insupportable.—What's to be done with her? What's her complaint? Who's the aggressor? I'll e'en refer the matter fairly to my own conscience, and if she cast me there, I'll do her justice; if not, though the cost were ten times hers, I'll make myself easy for the rest of my life—Let me see,—'as to the fact I'm charged with, viz. That I have feloniously embezzled my inclinations among the rough
' and

‘ and smooth conversation of several undaunted gentle-
 ‘ women, and so forth.—That, I think, since it must be
 ‘ proved against me, I had best plead guilty to.—Be it
 ‘ so.——Very well!—A terrible charge indeed : and
 ‘ now—’

Enter Brush.

Brush. My Lady desires to know if your Lordship
 pleases to dine at home to-day.

Lord W. Right ! Another gentle enquiry. [*Aside.*]
 Why, tell her 'tis impossible to guess, but her Ladyship
 may do as she pleases. [*Exit Brush.*] But to go on.—

‘ Now let's hear the defendant, and then proceed to
 ‘ judgment and damages. Well ! the defendant says,
 ‘ that 'tis true he was in love with Madam up to her
 ‘ proud heart's wishes, but hoped that marriage was his
 ‘ end of servitude, that then her wise reserve, her pride,
 ‘ and other fine lady's airs would be all laid aside.——

‘ No,—her Ladyship was still the same unconquered
 ‘ heroine : if being endured could give me happiness,
 ‘ it was mine ; if not, she knew herself, and should not
 ‘ bend below her sex's value—I bore this long, then
 ‘ urged her duty ; that this reserve of humour was in-
 ‘ consistent with her being a friend, a wife, or a com-
 ‘ panion. She said 'twas Nature's fault, and I but talked
 ‘ in vain. Upon this I found my patience began to have
 ‘ enough on't : so I e'en made her invincibility a low
 ‘ bow, and told her I would dispose of my time in plea-
 ‘ sures which were a little more come-at-able ; which
 ‘ pleasures I have found, and she——has found out, but
 ‘ truly she won't bear it : and though she scorned to love,
 ‘ she'll condescend to hate ; she'll have redress, revenge,
 ‘ and reparation ; so that if I have a mind to be easy at
 ‘ home, I need but tremble at her anger, down on my
 ‘ knees, confess, beg pardon, promise amendment, keep
 ‘ my word, and the business is done. Now venerable,
 ‘ human conscience, speak, must I do this only to pur-
 ‘ chase what the greatness of her soul has taught me to be
 ‘ indifferent to ? Am I bound to fast, because her Lady-
 ‘ ship has no appetite ? Shall threats and brow-beatings
 ‘ fright me into justice, where my own will's a law ?—
 ‘ No, no, no ; positively no : I am lord of my own heart,
 ‘ sure, and whoever thinks to enter at my humour, shall
 ‘ speak

“ speak me very fair. Most generous conscience, I give you thanks for this deliverance ! And since I’m positive, I’ve little Nature on my side too, Madam may now go on with her noble repentment if she pleases.”

Enter Brush.

Brush. Lord George Brilliant gives his service, and if your Lordship’s at leisure he’ll wait upon you.

Lord W. Give my service, say I shall be glad to see him. [*Exit Brush.*] D’ye hear ! Brush ! [*Brush returns.*

Brush. My Lord !

Lord W. Is the footman come back yet ?

Brush. Yes, my Lord, he called at White’s, but there’s no letter for your Lordship.

Lord W. Very well. [*Exit Brush.*] I can’t imagine the meaning of it. Sure I have not played with the babyfaced girl ’till I’m in love with her ; and yet her disappointing me yesterday does not slip so easily through my memory, as things of this gentle nature used to do. A very phlegmatic symptom. — “ And yet, if she had come, ’tis ten to one, the greatest relief she could have given me, would have been a fair excuse to get rid of her ——— Hum ! ay, ay, all’s safe. She has only stirred my pride I find, my heart’s as sound as my constitution, and yet her not coming, nor excusing it, puzzles me.”

Enter Brush.

Brush. A letter for your Lordship.

Lord W. Who brought it ?

Brush. Snug, the chairman.

Lord W. Oh ! ’tis right, now we shall be let into the secret. [*Reads.*] “ I won’t beg your pardon for not coming yesterday, because it was not my fault, but indeed I’m sorry I could not.” Kind, however, though it is possible she may lie too. “ To be short, old Teizer smoaks the business, poss.” — By her stile, the child seems to have a great genius for iniquity : but who the deuce is old Teizer ? Oh ! that must be her uncle, Sir Friendly Moral ! “ Smoaks the business, poss !” Very well. “ For he watched me all day, as if he had been in love with me himself : but you may depend upon me this afternoon about five, at the same place, till when, dear Dismal, adieu ! [*Tears the letter.*] Well said ! ’egad, this

girl will debauch me! What pity 'tis her person does not spread like her understanding! But she is one of Eve's own sisters, born a woman. Bid the fellow stay for an answer. *[Exit Brush.]*

Enter Mrs. Hartshorn.

Hartf. My Lady desires to know if your Lordship pleases to drink any tea?

Lord W. What a mess of impertinence have I had this morning! But I'll make my advantage of this. *[Aside.]* Pray, thank your Lady, and tell her I desire she'll be pleased to come and drink some with me. *[Exit Hartf.]* When a man has a little private folly upon his hands, 'tis prudent to keep his wife in good humour, at least, till the frailty's thoroughly committed. *[Exit.]*

Enter Lady Wronglove and Brush.

Lady W. Where's my Lord?

Brush. I believe he's writing in his closet, Madam; if your Ladyship pleases, I'll go and see.

Lady W. No, stay—I'll—I'll—Wait without.

Brush. Jealous, by Jupiter! I must look sharp, I see.

[Retires.]

Lady W. Writing! then I am confirmed. Not a day passes without some fresh discovery of his perfidiousness. 'This usage is beyond patience. Sure men think that
' wives are stocks or stones, without all sense of injuries,
' or only born and bound to bear them! But since his
' villainies want the excuse of my deserving them, I'll let
' him see I dare resent them as I ought. I'll prove them
' first, and then revenge them with my scorn.' Hum!
—what's here? A torn letter! Ha! some fresh, some undiscovered slut!—Here, Hartshorn!

Enter Hartshorn.

Go to the door this minute, and tell the impudent fellow there, that my Lord says the letter requires no answer; and if he offers to bring any more, he'll have his limbs broke. *[Exit Hartshorn.]*

Brush. *[Behind.]* Ha! this was a lucky discovery! Between my Lord, or my Lady, it's hard if I don't mend my place by it.

Lady W. It is not yet so torn, but I may read it—
'Twill cost his wit some trouble to evade this proof, I'm sure. I'll have it pieced, and send it him. I'll let him see

THE LADY'S LAST STAKE.

13

see I know him still. A base, a mean——‘ Huh! now
‘ he’s nauseous to me!’ [Exit.

Re-enter Lord Wronglove with a letter.

Lord W. Here, give this to the porter.

Brush. My Lord, the porter’s gone. [Smiling.

Lord W. Gone! how so?——What does the fellow
sneer at?

Brush. My Lord, I beg your Lordship’s pardon for
my boldness, but perhaps it may be more useful to you
than my silence; I saw something that happened just
now——

Lord W. What’s the matter?

Brush. While your Lordship was writing within, my
Lady, I fancied by her looks, suspected something by
Snug’s being at the door (for she enquires every mortal’s
business that comes to speak with your Lordship) but
here she came, and bid me go out of the room. Upon
which I made bold to watch her at the door, where I saw
her pick up the pieces of that letter your Lordship tore
just now; and then she flew into a violent passion, and
ordered the porter to be sent away without his answer.

Lord W. No matter; you know where to find him.

Brush. Yes, my Lord, he plies at White’s.

Lord W. Run after him quick, tell him it was a
mistake, and that’s his answer. [Gives a letter.] [Exit
Brush.] Let me see—I shall certainly hear of this letter
from my wife; and ’tis probable her pride will have as
much pleasure in reproaching me, as her good-nature
would in finding me innocent. I must take care not to
let her grow upon me. ‘ To bear the open insolence of a
‘ wife, is a punishment that exceeds both the crime and
‘ the pleasure of any favours the sex can give us. But why
‘ am I so apprehensive of a poor woman’s being out of hu-
‘ mour? My gravity for the matter would be as ridicu-
‘ lous as her passion. The worst on’t is, that in our ma-
‘ trimonial squabbles, one side’s generally forced to
‘ make a confidence with their servants: I am reduced
‘ now to trust this fellow——But I can make it his interest
‘ to be secret——’

Enter Hartshorn with tea.

Hartf. Here’s your Lordship’s tea.

B

Lord

Lord W. Oh, thank you, Mrs. Hartshorn!—Where's your Lady?

Hartf. My Lord, she's not very well, and desired me to give your Lordship this. [*Gives a letter.*]

Lord W. So, now it comes——Let's see——Ha! the child's letter, faith, carefully pieced together again——How! here's some of her own hand too. [*Reads*] “Something has happened that makes me unfit for tea; I would tell you what, but that I find 'tis the fashion for married people to have separate secrets.”——Humph! This is speaking pretty plain. Now, if I take no notice of it, I shall have her walk by me in the house with a dumb, gloomy insolence for a fortnight together. Suppose I let her—No—better talk with her——The most violent jealousy is often subject to the grossest credulity. I'll make one push for't however; 'tis certainly the most prudent to come off if I can——Mrs. Hartshorn, pray, tell your Lady I must needs see her; I have something to say to her that will make her laugh, though she were dying of the vapours.

Hartf. My Lord, I'll tell her. [*Exit.*]

Lord W. Or suppose her jealousy is too wise for my wit, say she won't be imposed upon. At worst, I'll carry it on with such an excess of assurance, that I'll give her the mortification of thinking that I believe I have deceived her. ‘She shan't have the pleasure of knowing she insults me; I'll crush the very hope of her resentment, and by seeming always easy myself, make her jealousy a private plague to her insolence. She shall never catch me owning any thing. Her pride would have its end indeed, if she could once bring me to the humble shame of confession.’—Oh, she's here!

Enter Lady Wronglove very grave.

Lady W. D'ye want me for any thing?

Lord W. Ay, child, sit down. Hartshorn told me you were not well. So I had a mind to divert you a little. Such a ridiculous adventure sure! Ha, ha, ha!

Lady W. I am as well as I expect to be, tho' perhaps not so easy to be diverted.

Lord W. Ha, ha, ha! no matter for that, if I don't divert you—Here, take your dish, child—Ha, ha, ha!

Lady W. I shan't drink any.

Lord

' *Lord W.* Ha, ha, ha! Do you know now, that I know what makes you so out of humour? Ha, ha!

Lady W. Upon my word, you have a good assurance.

[Turning away.

' *Lord W.* Ha, ha, ha! Do you know too, that I am now insulting you with the most ridiculous malice, and yet with all the comical justice in the world? Ha, ha!

Lady W. But, my Lord, all this is mightily thrown away upon me. I never had any great genius to humour, besides, that little I have, you know, I have now reason to be out of. And to spare you the vain trouble of endeavouring to impose upon me, I must tell you, that this usage is fit only for the common wretches you converse with.

Lord W. By my soul, I don't believe the like ever happened in all the accidents of human life! Such an incredible, such a romantic complication of blunders, 'that, let me perish, if I think Moliere's *Cocu Imaginaire* has half so many turns in it, as you shall hear, child.' In the first place, the porter makes a blunder, by mistaking the place for the person, and enquires for me, instead of one at my house; my blockhead, Brush, here, carries it on, and with his own blundering hand gives his mistress's letter to me. No sooner was that mistake set to rights, but the pieces of the letter fall into your hands, and (as if fortune resolved the jest should not be lost) you really fancied it came from a mistress of mine; and so, by way of comical resentment, fall out of humour with your tea, and send it to me again, ha, ha, ha!

' *Lady W.* This evasion, my Lord, is the worst stuff that ever any fure was made of.

' *Lord W.* 'Twon't do, I find, but 'tis no matter, I'll go on. [*Aside.*] Ha, ha! And so, upon this, what does me I, but instead of making you easy, lets you go on with the fancy, till I was thoroughly convinced your suspicion was real, and then comes me about with the most unexpected catastrophe, and tells you the whole truth of the matter, ha, ha, ha!

' *Lady W.* A very pretty farce indeed, my Lord! but by the thinness of the plot, I see you have not given yourself much contrivance.

' *Lord W.* No, upon my soul, 'twas all so directly in

'nature, that the least fiction in the world had knocked it all to pieces.'

Lady W. It's very well, my Lord; I am as much diverted with the entertainment, I suppose, as you expect I should be.

Lord W. Ha, ha! Why, did I not tell you I should divert you?

Lady W. You have indeed, my Lord, to astonishment. Tho' there's one part of the design you left out in the relation, and that was the answer that you wrote (by mistake, I suppose) to your man's mistress.

Lord W. Oh, that—why, that was—that was—the—the—the—the answer? Ay, ay, the answer was sent after the porter; because you know, if he had gone away without it, 'twas fifty to one the poor fellow's mistress would not have been reconciled to him this fortnight. But did you observe, child, what a coarse familiar stile the puss writes?

Lady W. Coarseness of stile is no proof that the puss might not be mistress to a man of quality. And I must tell you, my Lord, when men of quality can find their account in engaging with women whose highest modesty is impudence, methinks they should not wonder if men of their own principles, whose impudence is often mistaken for wit, should talk their wives into the same failing.

Lord W. Let me die, child, if you han't a great deal of good sense

[*Sipping his tea.*]

Lady W. 'Tis not the first time that an affronted wife has convinced the world of her personal merit, to the severe repentance of her husband.

Lord W. Abundance of good sense.

Enter Brush.

Brush. Lord George, my Lord.

Lord W. Desire him to walk in——Nay, you need not go, child.

Lady W. I am not in a humour now for company—There's a couple of you.

[*Exit.*]

Lord W. What pains this silly woman takes to weary me! always widening the breach between us, as if 'twere her interest to have no hopes of an accommodation, as if she felt no pain in making her own life wretched, so
she

She could but imbitter mine——Let her go on—Here's one that always sweetens it.

Enter Lord George.

Ah, my Georgy! 'Kiss.'

Lord Geo. 'And kiss, and kiss again, my dear——By Ganymede, there's nectar on thy lips. Oh, the pleasure of a friend, to tell the joy!'——Oh, Wronglove! such hopes!

Lord W. Hey-day! what's the matter?

Lord Geo. Such soft ideas! such thrilling thoughts of aching pleasure!——In short, I have too much on't.

Lord W. Thou strange piece of wild nature!

'*Lord Geo.* Death! I tell thee, man, I'm above half seas over.

'*Lord W.* One would rather think half the seas were over you; for, in my mind, you don't talk like a man above water.

'*Lord Geo.* Pr'ythee, forgive me. How is it possible I should, when all my faculties are drowned in joy?

'*Lord Geo.* Then, pr'ythee, my dear, float about, shut down the sluice of your rapture, before the nothingness of your words gets over the banks of your understanding.' In plain common sense, let's know the business.

Lord Geo. Why, the business, in one word——it's impossible to tell you.

Lord W. Impossible! Will you drink any tea?

'*Lord Geo.* Tea! thou soft, thou sober, sage, and venerable liquid, thou innocent pretence for bringing the wicked of both sexes together in a morning; thou female tongue-running, smile-smoothing, heart-opening, wink-tipping cordial, to whose glorious insipidity I owe the happiest moment of my life, let me fall prostrate thus, and f—p, f—p, f—p, thus adore thee.

[Kneels and sips the tea.]

'*Lord W.* Come, come, you silly, affected rogue, get up, and talk at least like a fool to be understood.

'*Lord Geo.* Don't you think there's pleasure in affection, when one's heartily in good-humour?

[Very affectedly.]

'*Lord W.* Imperinent puppy! Drink your tea.'

Lord Geo. Oh, Wronglove ! I have been drinking tea—
[*Transported.*]

Lord W. With some laughing ladies, I presume, whose incessant concussion of words would not let you put in a syllable, and so you are come to ease yourself upon me.

Lord Geo. Then, pr'ythee, be a friend, and let me speak.

Lord W. Not only blank verse, but rhyme, if you please. In the name of nonsense, go on.

Lord Geo. Swear then.

Lord W. Swear !

Lord Geo. Ay, swear.

Lord W. Blood ! ———

Lord Geo. Psha ! Pr'ythee.

Lord W. Nay, pray, Sir, give me leave to play the fool in my turn ; the moment you speak to be understood, I'll secure you a reasonable answer.

Lord Geo. Swear then never (to any mortal) to trust from you, to hint, or speak, of what I shall discover.

Lord W. Upon my honour.

Lord Geo. Honour ! The common hackney-oath of fops, rakes, and sharpers : swear me by something dearer than thy eyes, than life or liberty.

Lord W. Indeed !

Lord Geo. Swear me by all thy tenderest hopes in love ; by thy soft sighs of pain, proceeding from thy pleasure ; swear ———

Lord W. I do, by something dearer to me yet——By my short stay after possession, by my chaise after hard riding, by my easy chair after dinner, and by t'other bottle after the bill's paid, I will be secret.

Lord Geo. Ay, now be perjured if thou darest—Know then——at last, that generous lovely creature has said behind my back, that I am the most sober, good-humour'd, and agreeably inoffensive young fellow, that ever came into a civil family. To be short, she has made me a general invitation to her house ; upon which I have taken lodgings that look full into her back closet window, and drank tea with her alone this morning.

Lord W. Some humble sinner, whose only charm is being another man's mistress, I'll lay my life on't. [*Aside.*] Well, and what did you give her ?

Lord

Lord Geo. A bleeding heart, all studded o'er with wounds of her eyes' own making.

Lord W. That is, you pulled out your watch as you were going away, and she took a fancy to one of the seals. 'Tho' by the device I presume it was only a modern bauble; so 'tis probable you might not have come off much cheaper at Mother Davis's.'

Lord Geo. 'Profanation!'——To be serious then at once, I have solid hopes of my Lady Gentle.

Lord W. Hoh! hoh! Oh, thou vain, thou senseless fop! Is all this mighty rapture then only from a fine woman's being commonly civil to thee? The mere innocent effect of her good-humour and breeding.

Lord Geo. Psha! tell not me of whence it is born, let it suffice I've form'd it into hope; let your tame, civil, secret sighers, such as never think the fair-one sure till they hear the tag of her lace click, think it no cause for joy; but I have a soul that wakes, that starts up, at the least dawning cranny of a hope, and sets my every faculty on fire. She must, she must, she must be won——For since I have resolved to hope, my fancy doubly paints her beauties——Oh, she's all one fragrant field of charms, to pamper up the blood of wild desire.

Lord W. Ah, George, what luscious morsels then must her husband take of her!

Lord Geo. Why didst thou mention him?—Death! I can't bear that thought——Can she love him?——Oh, the verdant vales, the downy lawns of fruitful bliss, the overflowing springs of cool refreshing beauty, that happy dog must revel, range, and sport in!

Lord W. Nay, the woman's a fine creature, that's certain; it's a thousand pities one can't laugh her out of that unfashionable folly of liking her husband, when here's a man of undisputed honour too, that knows the world, that understands love and ruin to a tittle, that would at the least tip of a wink rid her of all her incumbrances, set her at the very top of the mode, and qualify her for a separate maintenance in the twinkling of an hackney-coach window.

Lord Geo. Can you be a moment serious?

Lord

' *Lord W.* Faith, Sir, if I am not, 'tis only to make you so.'

Lord Geo. You seem to think this business impracticable.

Lord W. Why, truly, for any great progress I see you have made, I don't think but it is: and if you'll take my opinion of the woman, I do think, provided you'll allow there's any such thing in nature, she's one of impregnable virtue; that you can no more make a breach in her honour, than find a flaw in her features. Bate but a little of her over-fondness for play, she's the perfection of a good wife.

Lord Geo. Oh, your servant, Sir! you own she has a passion for play then.

Lord W. That I can't deny; and what's worse, I doubt she likes it a great deal better than she understands it. I hear she has lost considerably to the Count of late.

Lord Geo. You must know then, that the Count is my engineer; he and I have a right understanding; whenever she plays we are sure of her money. Now he has already stripped her of all her running cash, besides eight hundred pounds upon honour: for payment of which I made him send her a downright pressing letter by me this morning. I observed her a little startled when she read it, and took that opportunity to screw myself into the secret, and offered my assistance. To be short, I addressed myself with so much tender regard to her confusion, that before we parted, I engaged this afternoon to lend her a thousand pounds of her own money to pay him.

Lord W. I confess your battery's raised against the only weak side of her virtue. But how are you sure you can work her to push her ill fortune? She may give over play. What will all your advantages signify, if she does not lose to you more than she can pay?

Lord Geo. Oh! I have an expedient for that too—— Look you, in short, I won't spoil my plot by discovering it; a few hours will make it ripe for execution, and then——but

There is no fear that I should tell
The joys that are unspeakable.

' *Lord W.* Ha, ha! and so you are really in love, to the very extremity of passion!

' *Lord*

Lord Geo. Pr'ythee, don't laugh at me. [*Affectedly.*

Lord W. Don't you think I have heard you with a great deal of patience?

Lord Geo. Nay, I know we puppies in love are tire-some.'

Lord W. And so you think that all this extravagance of your stile and gesture must have convinced me that you really care sixpence for this woman?

Lord Geo. Would you have me swear?

Lord W. Ay, come, do a little.

Lord Geo. Why, then, by all the sacred ties of honour, friendship, and restless love, had I but five thousand pounds in the whole world, and nothing else could purchase her——

Lord W. I dare swear you'd give it every shilling, that you really could love her, tho' it were only to get rid of your passion for Mrs. Conquest.

Lord Geo. Why, then, look you——

Lord W. You may swear till you are black in the face; but you love her, her only, indeed you do; your passion for Lady Gentle is affected. Not but I grant you'll pursue it, for when nothing's in view you're indefatigable. You are a little uneasy at the smallness of Mrs. Conquest's fortune, and would fain persuade yourself you are in love in another place——But, hark'e—you'll marry her——And so, if your chariot's at the door, you shall carry me to White's.

Lord Geo. Why, then (except myself) thou art positively the most impudent fellow upon the face of the earth.

[*Exeunt.*

END of the FIRST ACT.

A C T II.

SCENE *continues.**Enter Lady Wronglove.*

‘ LADY WRONGLOVE.

‘ **W**HY am I thus uneasy ? Sure I am unreasonable
 ‘ in my temper ; I over-rate myself——For if
 ‘ the husband’s violation of his marriage-vow is in itself
 ‘ so foul an injury, whence is it that the law’s so sparing
 ‘ in its provision of redress ? And yet ’tis sure an injury,
 ‘ because just nature makes the pain of bearing it out-
 ‘ rageous. Oh, hard condition ! For if e’en that pain
 ‘ provokes the wife to move for reparation, the world’s
 ‘ gross custom makes her perhaps a jest to those who
 ‘ should assist her. If she offends, the crime’s unpardonable,
 ‘ yet if injured, has no right to compensation.
 ‘ It may be usual this, but sure ’tis unnatural.’

*Enter Mrs. Hartshorn.**Hartf.* Madam, the porter’s come back.*Lady W.* Bring him in.[*Exit Hartf.**Enter Porter.*

Well, friend, how far have you followed them ?

Port. Why, and it please your honour, first they both went in Lord George’s chariot to White’s.*Lady W.* How long did they stay ?*Port.* Why, and it please your honour, they staid, as near as I can guess, about——a very little time.*Lady W.* Whither did they go then ?*Port.* Why, then they stopped a little at the coach-maker’s at Charing-Cross, and looked upon a small thing there they call a booby-hutch, and did not stay ; and so then stopped again at the fruit-shop in Covent-Garden, and then just went up to Tom’s coffee-house, and then went away to the toy-shop at the Temple gate, and there they staid I can’t tell you how long, and please you.*Lady W.* Did they buy any thing ?*Port.* Yes, a number of things, truly.*Lady W.* Were they mostly for men’s use, or how ?*Port.* Nay, I don’t know ; such sort of trangams as
the

the gentry use: I remember one was 'such' a kind of a small scissar-case 'as that by your honour's side,' my Lord Wronglove bought it.

Lady W. So! that was not for me, I am sure. [*Aside.*] Do you know what he paid for it?

Port. Troth, I can't say I do. They came away, an't like your honour, but I did not see them pay for any thing—And so after that——

Enter Mrs. Hartshorn.

Hartf. Young Mrs. Notable is come to wait upon your Ladyship.

Lady W. Here, come in the next room, friend, I must employ you farther. Desire her to walk in, I'll wait upon her presently. [*Exeunt.*]

Re-enter Mrs. Hartshorn with Miss Notable.

Hartf. If your Ladyship pleases to walk in, my Lady knows you are here, Madam. Dear Madam, how extremely your Ladyship's grown within this half year!

Miss Not. O fie, Mrs. Hartshorn, you don't think me taller, do you?

Hartf. O, dear Madam, to an infinity. 'Nay, and 'so plump too, so fresh looked, so roundhipped, and full-chested——that'——I'm sure, Madam, he! he! If I were a young gentleman of quality, Madam, he!——Your Ladyship will pardon my freedom—I protest, he! he!—— [*Curtseying and simpering.*]

Miss Not. I vow, Mrs. Hartshorn, you have a great deal of good-humour; is not your Lady very fond of you?

Hartf. Truly, Madam, I have no reason to complain of my Lady; but you must know, Madam, of late there have been some concerns in the family between my Lord and she, that I vow, my poor Lady is seldom in humour with any body.

Miss Not. I'm mighty sorry for that.——What, does my Lord give her any occasion for jealousy, think you?

Hartf. Occasion, quoth'a! O Lard! Madam—But 'tis not fit for me to speak.

Miss Not. [*Aside.*] I'm glad to hear this—'Tis possible her Ladyship may be convinced that fifteen is as fit an age for love, as fix and twenty. And if her jealousy's kindled

kindled already, I'll blow it into a blaze before I part with her.

Hartf. Madam, I hear my Lady's coming. I humbly take my leave of your Ladyship: your Ladyship's most obedient servant. [*Impertinently cringing.*]

Miss Not. Your servant, good Mrs. Hartshorn; if you'll call to see me, I have a very pretty new cross, that would become your neck extremely.—You'll pardon me:

Hartf. Dear Madam, your Ladyship is so obliging—I shall take an opportunity to thank your Ladyship—

[*Exit.*]

Enter Lady Wronglove.

Miss Not. My dear, dear Lady Wronglove! you'll forgive me; I always come unseasonably, but now 'tis pure friendship, and my concern for you that brought me.

Lady W. My dear, you know I am always glad to see you—but you'll excuse me, if I am not the company I would be; I am mightily out of spirits of late. I hope Sir Friendly's well.

Miss Not. After the old rate, past the pleasures of life himself, and always snarling at us that are just come into 'em. I do make such work with him——He reads me every morning a lecture against lightness, and gadding abroad, as he calls it; then do I teize him to death, and threaten him, if he won't let me do what I please, I'll chuse a new guardian that will.

Lady W. Come, don't disoblige him, my dear; for if you'll let me speak as a friend, you have a good natural town-wit, I own, and a great many pretty qualities; but, take my word, your interest and reputation will find a better account in trusting them under your uncle's conduct, than your own.

Miss Not. I don't know that; for all his tedious self-denying course of philosophy is only to make me a good old woman: just the condition of the miser's horse, when he had taught him to live upon one oat a day, the poor creature died. So I am to spend all my youth in learning to avoid pleasures, that nature won't let me be able to taste when I am old—which is just as much as to say, don't drink while you are thirsty; because if you stay
while

while you are choaked, you won't care whether you drink or no.

Lady W. What an improving age is this ? [*Aside.*] But, my dear, pray let me talk to you a little seriously, and I hope it won't be lost upon you ; for you have an understanding that's uncommon at your age. I have observed, among all the unfortunate of our sex, more women have been undone by their wit than their simplicity : wit makes us vain, and when we are warm in the opinion of it, it sometimes hurries us through the very bounds of prudence, interest, and reputation ; have a care of being singled out by the men. Women, like deer, are safest in the herd ; she that breaks away from her acquaintance, may be most followed indeed ; but the end of the chace is very often fatal.

Miss Not. But pray, Madam, now with submission, I think your argument won't hold ; for a deer's business is to escape, but a woman's is to be caught, or else the world's strangely altered.

Lady W. Honourably, I grant you.

Miss Not. Honourably ! That is to stand still like a poor dumb thing, and be tamely shot out of the herd. Now I think a young creature, that fairly trusts to her heels, and leads you twenty or thirty couple of brisk young fellows after her, helter-skelter, over hills, hedges, bogs, and ditches, has ten times a fairer chance for her life ; and if she is taken at last, I will hold twenty to one, among any people of taste, they'll say she's better meat by half.

Lady W. Well said, child ! Upon my word you have a good heart : the address of a lover uses to be more terrible at your age. You seem to have resolved upon not dying a maid already.

Miss Not. Between you and I, Lady Wronglove, I have been positive in that this twelvemonth.

Lady W. Why then, since we are upon secrets, my dear, I must tell you, the road you are in is quite out of the way to be married : husbands and lovers are not caught with the same bait.

Miss Not. With all my heart ; let me but catch lovers plenty, I'm satisfied : for if having one's will is the pleasure of life, I'm sure catching a husband is catching a

Tartar. No, give me dear, precious liberty—content and a cottage.

Lady W. And would not a good husband content you?

Miss Not. And why must I expect a better than any of my neighbours? Do but look into the private comforts of the dear, fond, honourable couples about this town; and you'll find there's generally two beds, two purses, two tables, two coaches, two ways—And so in most of their pleasures an unmolested separation is the only chain that keeps them together. Now pray, Madam, will you give me leave to be free, and ask you one question?

Lady W. Freely, my dear.

Miss Not. Then did you yourself, never, upon no occasion, repent your being married?

Lady W. That question's very particular, my dear.

Miss Not. Perhaps you'll pardon me, when I give you my reasons for asking; but if you never did repent it, I am resolved I won't be the first that shews you occasion to do it.

Lady W. I don't know, my dear, that ever I gave any body reason to think me uneasy at home; but you speak, child, as if you knew something that ought to make me so.

Miss Not. Then depend upon't, unless I were sure you were uneasy already, I'd as soon be locked up as tell you any thing.

Lady W. Well, suppose I am uneasy.

Miss Not. Pardon—I can't suppose it—But suppose you are not, then I should play a fool's part, I'm sure, to make you so.

Lady W. I am sure you know something of my Lord; pray tell me.

Miss Not. Since I see you are uneasy, and I know you love but too well; upon condition you'll think I only do it to help your cure, I will tell you: for when a woman is once sure she has a substantial reason to hate her husband, I should think the business must be half over.

Lady W. You make me impatient.

Miss Not. Let me think a little to soften it, as well as I can. What great fools these wise over-grown prudes are, to tell the greatest secret of her life to a girl? To
own

own her husband false, and all her sober charms neglected — But if she knew that young Pill Garlick were the occasion of it too. Lard ! how her blood would rise ! What a disfigurable condition would my poor head-clothes be in ? [*Aside.*] Well, Madam, to begin then with the end of my story ; in one word, my Lord is grossly false to you, and to my knowledge has an appointment from a mistress this very afternoon, to meet her in a hackney-coach in the road to Chelsea.

Lady W. All this, my dear, except their place of meeting, I knew before ; but how you come to know it, I confess, amazes me.

Miss Not. Look you, Madam, all I know is this — While my Lord Wronglove and Lord George stayed at our house, to speak with my Lady Gentle this morning, I happened to sit in the next room to them, reading the last new play : where, among the rest of their precious discourse, I over-heard my Lord Wronglove tell Lord George, the very appointment, word for word, as I have told it you.

Lady W. You did not hear her name ?

Miss Not. No, nor what she was ; only that she's pretty and young : for I remember Lord George ridiculed his fancy, and called her green fruit. Little, if you please, says t'other, but riper I'll warrant her : and I had rather gather my fruit myself, than have it, like you, through the several hands that bring it to Covent-Garden.

Lady W. The brutal thought !

Miss Not. When my Lady came down, she made them stay dinner ; which was no sooner done, but I immediately slipped away to tell you of it : for methought I was as much touched with the wrong done to your Ladyship, as if it had been to myself.

Lady W. My dear, I am extremely obliged to you.

Miss Not. I'm sure I meant well — For to know the worst, is not half so bad as to mistrust it.

Lady W. Infinitely obliged to you.

Miss Not. Oh ! she deliciously uneasy. [*Aside, and pleased.*] I'll tell you what I would advise your Ladyship to do : call for your hood and scarf, and an hackney-coach to the door this minute — In the mean time I'll

step home again (for I'm sure they are not gone yet, the tea was but just called for when I came away) and the moment my Lord Wronglove takes his leave, I'll send you word: then you may clap on your mask, drive after him, and in five minutes, I'll lay my life, you catch them together.

Lady W. Why then if you'll do me the favour to send me that word, my dear, I shall have leisure in the mean time, perhaps, to improve upon your advice.

Miss Not. If you'll let one of your people send my servant for a chair, I'll go this minute.

Lady W. Here—Who's there?

[*Mrs. Hartshorn at the door.*]

Miss Not. Now I think I shall be even with his honour, I'll teach him to tell of favours before he has 'em at least: if I had not discovered him, in my conscience he had let Madam discover me.

[*Aside.*]

Lady W. I would not but have known this for the world.

Miss Not. I am over-joyed I can serve your Ladyship: you'll excuse my running away.

Enter Mrs. Hartshorn.

Hart. Here's a chair, Madam.

Miss Not. Well, I'll take no leave, for I'll call again by and by, to know your success. Your servant, servant.

[*Runs off.*]

Lady W. Get me a hood and scarf, and a mask, and bid one of the footmen call an hackney-coach to the door immediately. [*Exit Hartshorn.*] 'What will become of me? Should not I strive to hate him? I think I almost do. Is he not contemptible? Fogh! What odious thing must this be, that he converses with? A woman without modesty has something sure of horror in her nature! What is it then in men, that over-looks so foul a coarseness in the heart, and makes them infamously fond of shame and outsize? I blush to think on't.' How tame must he suppose me, if I bear this usage? I'll let him see I have a spirit daring as his own, and as resentful too. 'Since he dares be base, I cannot bear but he should see I know him so.' To sigh in secret o'er my wrongs, and pay his falsehood the regards

I only

I only owe his truth, is more than nature can submit to.

‘When once the nuptial bond’s by him destroy’d,

‘The obligations of the wife are void.’ [Exit.]

SCENE *changes to Lady Gentle’s House.*

Lady Gentle, Lord Wronglove, and Lord George, at a tea-table.

Lady Gent. [To Lord Wronglove.] Come, come, my Lord, you must stay another dish, indeed.

Lord W. Upon my faith, Madam, my business is of the last concern; your Ladyship knows I don’t use to start from good company.

Lady Gent. Well, I e’en give you over, you grow perfectly good for nothing.

Lord W. The truth on’t is, Madam, we fond husbands are fit for nothing—but our wives.

Lady Gent. Come, none of your raillery upon one that’s too good for you.

Lord W. Why, she has some high qualities, indeed, Madam, that I confess are far above my merit; but I’m endeavouring every day to deserve them, as fast as I can.

Lady Gent. Go, on, you deserve nothing at all, now you disoblige me.

Lord W. I shall take a better opportunity to make myself amends for going so soon; I am your Ladyship’s most humble servant. Mrs. Conquest, pray take care of Lord George.

Mrs. Con. O, he shall want for nothing, my Lord; pray do you take the same care of the lady you are going to.

Lord W. Ha, ha, ha!

[Exit.]

Lord Geo. My Lord Wronglove is a very pretty gentleman, and yet how unaccountable ’tis to hear good sense jest upon marriage!

Lady Gent. My Lord has so much good sense, that he does not mean what he says, I dare swear for him.

Lord Geo. Indeed, Madam, I can’t think he does; I never saw any thing amiss in his actions, either at home or abroad.

Lady Gent. Nor I indeed : and I think your Lordship very much to be commended ; you love to put the fairest construction upon things ; 'tis a certain sign of good sense, and good principles.

Lord Geo. Your Ladyship has so much of both, that I can't help being proud of any thing that recommends me to your esteem.

Lady Gent. Upon my word, my Lord, you have a great share on't, and I think very deservedly : 'tis not a common thing in this town, to find a gentleman of your figure, that has courage enough to keep marriage in countenance, especially when 'tis so much the mode to be severe upon't.

Lord Geo. Now that to me is an intolerable vanity, to see a man ashamed of being honourably happy, because 'tis the fashion to be viciously wretched. I don't know how it may be with other people, but if I were married, I should as much tremble to speak lightly of my wife, as my religion.

Mrs. Con. O ! the hypocritical monster ! When he knows I know, if he were to be hanged, he'd scarce think it a reprieve to be married. [*Aside.*] 'There's roguery at the bottom of all this, I'm sure—The devil does not use to turn faint for nothing.'

Lady Gent. I am in hopes your Lordship's good opinion of marriage will persuade you not to be long out of it : we that feel the happiness of a condition ourselves, naturally wish our friends in it.

Mrs. Con. What do you think of me, my Lord, you know I have been about you a great while ?

Lord Geo. Fy, fy ! you marry ! A mere rake !

Mrs. Con. O but I fancy now, a man of your sobriety and stayed temper, would soon reform me.

Lord Geo. This subtle devil 'snoaks me !'—We are mortals, faith—It shews her a little jealous however.

[*Aside.*]

Mrs. Con. I'll be whipped if ever you marry more to your mind ; what signifies two or three thousand pounds in one's fortune, where you are sure it would be made up in good-humour and obedience.

Lord Geo. And considering how intimate a foot you and I have always conversed upon ; what a venerable figure should

should I make in the solemn authority of an husband, pretending to command you.

Lady Gent. O! if you were married, there would be but one will between you.

Lord Geo. There's the danger, Madam; there being but one, we should certainly squabble, who should have it. I shou'd like Mrs. Conquest, perhaps, for my wife's companion: one as a light allay to the softness of the other's temper: But if I were once fix'd in love, and shou'd unfortunately bolt upon the least glimpse of jealousy, I am such a slave to tenderness, I know 'twould break my heart.

' *Mrs. Con.* Now cou'd I wash his face with my tea.' [*Aside.*

Lady Gent. Well, I'm confident my Lord wou'd make an extreme good husband.

Lord Geo. I don't know but I really might, Madam, if I cou'd persuade any woman beside your Ladyship to think so.

Mrs. Con. How artfully the monster screws himself into her good opinion; I must take him down a little—
[*Aside.*] Pray, my Lord, how many women have you had of late, by way of balm, to heal the slight wound I gave you?

Lord Geo. Upon my faith, Madam, I had my wound and cure from the same person: my passion for you went forward like Penelope's web; whatever your eyes did in the day, a very short reflection upon your temper unravell'd at night; so that if you will needs know the truth, I have not been reduc'd of late to apply myself for relief to any body but your Ladyship. Ha! ha! ha! ha!

[*Affects an insulting laugh.*]

Mrs. Con. Well, he has a glorious assurance!

Lord Geo. I fancy, Mrs. Conquest, you measure my principles by your own; for by your question you seem to think me a very wild creature.

Mrs. Con. O fy, my Lord! so far from it, that I never saw any thing so astonishingly modest.

Lord Geo. Not so modest, neither, Madam; but if my Lady Gentle will give me leave, I dare use you most intolerably for this,

Lady Gent. Ev'n as you please, my Lord; for I confess

fess her assurance is enough to dash any one out of countenance.

Lord Geo. Does your Ladyship hear that, Madam? Remember, now, that I am allowed the modest person; but to let you see, that in a just cause I scorn to take the advantage of my character, I'll lay it aside for once, and with an honest freedom tell you, your attempts upon me are vain; you are homely, downright homely; and if she were not a-kin to me, I wou'd as soon marry my grandmother.

Mrs. Con. Ah, poor soul! every body knows, as well as myself, I am more than tolerably handsome: and (which you are ready to tear your flesh at) the whole town knows you think so.

Lord Geo. Madam—did your Ladyship ever hear so transcendant an assurance?

Lady Gent. Nay, I'm on your side, my Lord—I think you can't be too free with her.

Lord Geo. I'll tell your Ladyship what this creature did once; such an instance of her intrepid self-sufficiency—

Lady Gent. Pray let's hear it. Ha, ha!

Mrs. Con. With all my heart, I'll be heard too.

Lord Geo. I'll tell you, Madam—About two years ago, I happened to make a country visit to my Lady Conquest, her mother, and one day at the table, I remember, I was particularly pleas'd with the entertainment, and upon enquiry found that the bill of fare was under the direction of Mademoiselle here: now it happened at that time, I was myself in want of a housekeeper; upon which account I thought it wou'd not be amiss, if I now and then paid her a little particular civility: to be short, I fairly told her, I had a great mind to have a plain good housewife about me, and dropt some broad hints, that the place might be her's for asking—Wou'd you believe it, Madam, if I'm alive, the creature grew so vain upon't, so deplorably mistook my meaning, that she told me her fortune depended upon her mother's will, and therefore she could receive no proposals of marriage without her consent: ha, ha! Now after that unfortunate blunder of her's, whether I ever gave my Lady the least trouble about
the

the business, I leave to the small remainder of her own conscience.

Mrs. Con. Madam, as I hope to be married, the poor wretch fell downright in love with me! for tho' he design'd only to make two days stay with us, it was above three months before I was able to get rid of him. When he came first indeed, he was a pretty sort of a tolerable impudent young fellow; but before he left us, O the power of beauty! I most barbarously reduc'd him to a tighing, humble, downright dulness and modesty.

Lady Gent. Ha, ha! Pray which of you two am I to believe all this while?

Lord Geo. Madam, if there's any faith in my senses, her only charms then were, and are still, not in raising of passion, but paste. I own I did voraciously admire her prodigious knack of making cheefecakes, tarts, custards, and syllabubs; Ha, ha, ha!

Lady Gent. Ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. Con. You see, Madam, what 'tis to let him be ever so little out of one's hands: now his very modesty is impudence: for to deny his being in love with me to another, is ten times more insolent, than his first owning it to me.

Lady Gent. Pshah, words signify nothing—Did he ever own it under his hand?

Mrs. Con. His hand! Ha, ha, ha, Madam—as I am a living creature, if I have one, I have five hundred billet-doux of his, where he has confess'd such things of my wit, and parts, and my eyes, and my air, and my shape, and my charms, that—Nay, he tells me in one, I have more natural beauties the moment I rise out of my bed in the morning, than the whole drawing-room upon a birthday by candle-light. There's for you.

Lord Geo. And she believ'd it, Madam—' Ha, ha, ha! That's well enough.' There's for you, ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. Con. Why, I believe still you think so—Then ' every line of 'em is so cram'd with sincerity, sighs, hopes, fears, flames, darts, pains, pangs, and passion, that in my conscience, if a body were to set 'em on fire, the flame would never go out.'

Lady

Lady Gent. Well, if you are in love, ho, this is certainly the newest way of wooing that ever was.

Lord Geo. Whether I am in love or no, I leave to your Ladyship.

Mrs. Con. And if your Ladyship should give it against him, whether or no I have reason to be vain upon't, let the world judge.

Lady Gent. The world, I believe, will think better of you both, when you are married.

Lord Geo. In the meantime, I believe, our surest comfort will be to think well of ourselves, and let it alone.

[*All rise.*]

Mrs. Con. I am glad to find you have modesty enough to suppose marriage wou'd make us think worse of one another.

Lord Geo. O fy! Mrs. Conquest, the more you are known, the more you must be liked.

[*Affectedly.*]

Mrs. Con. Is it then possible that you cou'd like me?

[*Affectedly.*]

Lady Gent. Ha, ha!

[*Going to the tea-table.*]

Lord Geo. If it were possible I cou'd like any thing out of matrimony, it wou'd be you.

Mrs. Con. Well, but tell me, do you like me as I am? ow Hdo you know but you may persuade me into it?

Lord Geo. Like you—Umph! ‘I ‘can’t tell—let’s see——[*Looking on her.*]——give me your hand.

‘*Mrs. Con.* There——

[*Strikes it into his.*]

‘*Lord Geo.* Now I must press it gently, to know if touching you keeps any correspondence with my heart,——Humh!——A well-flesh’d hand indeed!——

[*Ogling her.*]

‘*Mrs. Con.* O lud! not so hard tho’.

‘*Lord Geo.* Now try your other forces—look upon me.

‘*Mrs. Con.* There——

[*Staring wildly on him.*]

‘*Lord Geo.* [*Aside.*] She dares not, tho’ in raillery, look kindly on me—I like her for’t—This over-acted boldness to save her modesty at this time, looks like a secret inclination.

‘*Mrs. Con.* Well, how do you find yourself? Have I power—Do you burn much?

‘*Lord*

' *Lord Geo.* Umph ! No ; I'm a little too low for a fever
' —There's a small pulse indeed—Different sexes, like
' steel and flint, can't well meet without a sort of striking
' light between 'em, ; not but it goes out as fast as it
' comes in—One farther trial of your power, and I'll
' tell you more.

' *Mrs. Con.* Come, come, what is't ? I'll do't.
' *Lord Geo.* Turn away your face, hold your fan be-
' fore it. Now draw your hand slowly from me, and if
' you wou'd not have me think this lightness of your hu-
' mour a direct indifference, let me perceive a gentle
' hold at parting, as tho' you left a tender heart upon
' the pressure. [*She does as directed, and runs from him.*]

' *Mrs. Con.* Has your Ladyship any tea left ?
Lord Geo. Death ! that softening touch, has shot me
to the soul.

' *Mrs. Con.* Let me observe him well, for faith I
' try'd my utmost force, and even pleas'd myself in hopes
' to touch him. [*Aside.*]

' *Lord Geo.* [*Aside.*] How vain a coxcomb am I ?
' This girl has tool'd me to believe she likes me—That
' there should be such pleasure in the flattery of ano-
' ther's good opinion !—There's something in the open
' freedom of her humour, so much beyond the close re-
' serve of formal prudery, that—Death, if she were of
' any price but marriage—But I am a fool to think of
' her— [*Walks apart.*]

' *Mrs. Con.* Humh ! the symptoms are right—Hah—
' *Courage, ma fille*, the gentleman has a hole in his heart
' yet.

Enter a Servant, who gives Lord George a letter.

Lord Geo. Oh ! there, come in good time—Now to
drive out one poison with another—[*Goes to Lady Gen-
tle.*] Madam, if your Ladyship's at leisure—I have the
bills ready.

Lady Gent. I am ashamed to give your Lordship this
trouble.

Lord Geo. A trifle, Madam, one, two, three, four, five,
six, seven, eight, if your Ladyship pleases to look upon
'em, I think they are all hundred pounds. The rest I
have about me in gold.

Lady Gent. If your Lordship pleases, we'll reckon in
the next room—*Mrs. Conquest.*

Mrs. Con. I'll wait upon your Ladyship.

[*Exeunt Lady Gentle and Lord George.*]

—Eight hundred pounds, and the rest in gold, upon her bare word of honour! He'd hardly make that compliment, only to give me jealousy—The mortal's in earnest, that's certain—And what wicked way he proposes to find his account with her, I am afraid to think—Let me see, I know there will be deep play here to-night I have a thought in my head, that perhaps may lay a block in his way to her—Not but if there is such a thing as impregnable virtue, I dare swear my Lady Gentle is mistress of it; but then, on the other side, he has a consummate assurance, that's full as unsurmountable. 'And when the impudent hopes of a lover are like his, covered with modesty, it alters the case strangely—No woman can then be positive what will become of her.—Her not suspecting his design puts him but in a fairer way of carrying it on—Ah, lud! I don't like it.—He'll certainly—Well, let him do what he will, he can't marry her, that's one comfort, however. [*Exit.*]

END of the SECOND ACT.

A C T III.

SCENE *Lord Wronglove's House.*

Enter Miss Notable alone.

MISS NOTABLE.

SO! this has been a day of business—I think now I am pretty even with his Lordship; and if I cou'd but draw in Lord George to be his rival now, I should touch the very tip of happiness—For then to have the noise of these two lovers draw two or three score more after me, which it certainly wou'd: for when once a woman's the fashion, every body follows her; she fills like a musick-subscription, tho' there's nothing in't, nobody will be out on't—And then to have the full pleasure of mortifying Mrs. Conquest too, that's always holding her nose over me, as if I was not fit to be out of my bib and apron.

apron. If I don't make as good a rout in the town as she, 'tis very hard—sure!—I'll forbid 'em all to toast her, that's positive.

Enter Lord George.

Lord Geo. [*Aside.*] Here she is, faith, and alone; now, if I can but flatter her into my party, my business is half over—So! my little Venus!

Miss Not. Bless me—This is lucky—I vow, my Lord, you frighten me.

Lord Geo. Well, and what makes your pretty Ladyship here, now none of the family's at home?

Miss Not. O! my Lady will be at home presently! but pray how came your Lordship here then?

Lord Geo. Why, my life, I chanc'd to be driving by, and perhaps saw you go in. [*Takes her by the hand.*]

Miss Not. Well, and what then?

Lord Geo. Why then, upon enquiry, I found you were here alone, and that made me come in—My dear Miss! how charming you look to-day!

Miss Not. Pishah!

Lord Geo. What's the matter, my soul?

Miss Not. To tell me I look charming, and then call me Miss.

Lord Geo. O! I ask a thousand pardons.

Miss Not. No, dear Lord George, never call me Miss again, you don't call Mrs. Conquest so; and tho' she's bigger, and more out of shape, you know, than I, I'm sure I'm as much a woman in my heart, as she; nay, and in my passions too: for I cou'd kill any woman that wou'd rob me of a lover, and die for the dear man that wou'd not be won from me.

Lord Geo. O the pretty tenderness! But, my dear, take heed how you look upon me, for I am fam'd for assurance; and if once encourag'd, 'egad my hope sets no bounds to its impudence, but falls downright to resolving, and cocks its hat to the fair-one's face, tho' in the very fury of her virtue.

Miss Not. I fancy now you are as gentle as the rest of your brother beaus, whose greatest assurance is only of bragging of more than you have.

Lord Geo. Nay, if you doubt my virtues, child, I'll give you a taste of 'em, my dear,

[*Kisses her.*]

D

Miss

Miss Not. Hold ! hold ! O lud ! The deuce take you for me.

Lord Geo. Death ! what a pouting lip the rogue has !
 'egad ! I think my friend Wronglove's in the right on't sure.

Miss Not. Besides, do you think this bullying is any proof of your courage ?

[*Affectedly grave.*]

Lord Geo. Why then, my dear, to prevent all mistakes for the future, I now give you fair warning—
 'If you have a mind I shou'd not like you, don't flatter me any more ; for I tell you, I'm a downright believing puppy, and upon the least hint of a hope, can no more forbear proceeding'—

Miss Not. Look you, my Lord, all this is but stuff ; for, upon my word, you'll find it no easy matter to flatter me : I know well enough how you're dispos'd of.

Lord Geo. Why then, by all the pains, pangs, and torments—In short, I'm a fool ; I won't speak a word more to you.

Miss Not. Fy ! fy ! you had better give yourself these airs to Mrs. Conquest.

Lord Geo. I don't know but I had, Madam ; for I suppose you'll tell my Lord Wronglove of it.

Miss Not. Ah ! poor soul ! if Mrs. Conquest lik'd you no better than I do my Lord Wronglove, you'd think yourself a miserable creature.

Lord Geo. If Mrs. Conquest lik'd me but half so well as I like you, I am sure she'd be a miserable creature.

Miss Not. Umh ! how can you design upon me so ?

Lord Geo. How can you think to impose upon me 'so ?'

Miss Not. My Lord, I shall take it very ill, if you tell me of my Lord Wronglove.

Lord Geo. Then perhaps, Madam, I shan't take it well to be told of Mrs. Conquest.

Miss Not. My Lord Wronglove !

Lord Geo. Mrs. Conquest !

Miss Not. I'd have you know, my Lord, of all mankind, he's the farthest from my thoughts.

Lord Geo. And I'd have you know, Madam, of all womankind, Mrs. Conquest's as far out of mine.

Miss Not. Lard ! the assurance of some men !

Lord Geo. Look you, Madam, in short, I can prove what I say; and I hold ten pound of tea to a pinch of snuff, you won't let me prove it: come, and I'll take the same bet of you, that you don't prove to me what you said to me of my Lord Wronglove.

Miss Not. Come, it's done!

Lord Geo. Done!

Miss Not. Done, for both!

Lord Geo. Done!

Miss Not. Why then, to prove that I am innocent of the least inclination for him, I own he has teaz'd me these two months; and because I was resolv'd to give him his answer and his punishment at the same time, I this very afternoon made him an appointment; then went immediately and told my Lady Wronglove he was to meet a mistress at such an hour, to my knowledge, and so sent her in a fury after him to catch 'em together.

Lord Geo. But how cou'd you escape yourself, all this while?

Miss Not. O! I did not tell her it was I; for as soon as I had blown up her jealousy, I whipt into a hackney-coach, and got to my Lord before her, where I just popp'd out my head to him, and told him, in a pretended fright, my lady had dogg'd him, and I durst not stay; then drove away as fast as I cou'd, and e'en left her to make up accounts with him.

Lord Geo. Why then, my life, I do pronounce, that the stoutest wife of 'em all, with the spirit of revenge in her, could not have better buſtled through this business than you have.

Miss Not. And to let you see, Sir, that I never do design him any favour, I give you leave to tell him, that I sent my Lady after him — Which if he does, I'm sure my Lord Wronglove must suspect an intimacy between us. [*Aside.*] Nay, and if you'll but stay a moment, you'll have an opportunity, for I know he'll be at home presently.

Lord Geo. Then you are but just come from him!

Miss Not. The minute you saw me come in — And now, Sir, if you can but give me half as good a proof, that your heart is innocent of Mrs. Conquest — why 'tis possible, when you've been about seven years in the same

mind, I may then begin to think whether I shall consider of it or no.

Lord Geo. A notable encouragement, truly! But to let you see, Madam, I can't bear the scandal of a passion I'm not guilty of, as the last proof of my innocence, if either the doubts of my indifference, or you of my inclination, I am content to own both before your faces.

Miss Not. And so afterwards deny both, behind both our backs. Indeed you must think again, that won't do—'An old bite.'

Lord Geo. Come, I'll do more—I'll pretend to trust you with my passion for a third person, and give you leave, in the tenderest touches art or woman's wit can paint it, to tell it that third person, while Mrs. Conquest is by.

Miss Not. Uuh! this has a face.

Lord Geo. Nay, with a mask upon't too; for while I am convincing you I don't care a button for her; I impose upon a third person, purely to make a secret of my passion for you.

Miss Not. Better still—But when I have a mind to pull off the mask, you shan't refuse to show your face; for I don't care a man shou'd be asham'd of his passion neither.

Lord Geo. As you please for that.

Miss Not. I begin to like this strangely—This will teize Mrs. Conquest to death—But now the difficulty is to find out this third person—It must be one I'm acquainted with—What think you of my Lady Wronglove?

Lord Geo. Umh! No, I don't care to affront the wife of my friend.

Miss Not. Ah! do you think any of the sober souls about town are ever angry in their hearts to hear a man likes 'em.

Lord Geo. That's true; 'tis possible her resentment might let a man die in his bed after it—But 'tis not worth one's while to quarrel with him, about a woman I don't like.

Miss Not. Nay, I wou'd not run you into any hazard—unless 'twere upon my own account—And now I think on't I'll reserve that quarrel to myself.

[*Aside.*
Lord

Lord Geo. Come, I have found one—the properest person in the world is my Lady Gentle——You know you are all in a house together; her husband Sir William's in the country, I have no acquaintance with him; and if I lose her's by her, I don't care sixpence.

Miss Not. I like your choice very well; but I doubt it will require some art to manage her; for to say the truth, the woman is most fantastically simple: the very word love out of any mouth but her husband's, will make her start, as if a gun went off.

Lord Geo. Therefore, my dear, it must be done as if you did not do it: you must go to her in all the disorder in the world, as if I had had the impudence to endeavour to bribe you into my assistance.

Miss Not. Right; or I'll go first and quarrel with my uncle till he makes me cry, and then come in with my eyes swelled, and sobbing, as if I was almost choaked with the affront you had offered me, and then call you a thousand villains for daring to propose such an impudent thing to me.

Lord Geo. Admirable!—'Egad, the child's a bar's length in experience above the stoutest of her sex—Hark! I hear a coach stop.

Miss Not. Pshaw! Deuce take him, it's certainly my Lord! how shall we do?

Lord Geo. Why, if you'll give me leave, my life, I'll call at your house in an hour, and there we'll settle every point to a tittle.

Miss Not. With all my heart; I won't stay for my Lady; I'll go home now: but here comes my Lord, you shall see first how I'll use him.

Lord Geo. Don't trouble yourself, my life, it will only give him a jealousy, and do us no service.

Miss Not. Indeed! methinks if I am not afraid of his jealousy, you need not.

Lord Geo. My soul, I ask ten thousand pardons for my stupidity.

Enter Lord Wronglove, and stops Miss Notable, who seems to talk gravely with him.

Lord Geo. 'Egad, I can hardly believe my senses; if this girl's character were in a play, people that had not seen it would swear the notableness of her head were above nature.

Lord W. [*To Miss Notable.*] Did my Lord George tell you I told him that you were to meet me?

Miss Not. That's no matter, it's sufficient, I know you told him; but I thought at least you had seen enough of the world to know, that a confidant was the safest disguise for a rival.

Lord W. I am sorry your Ladyship has such an opinion of me.

Miss Not. Indeed, Sir, I shall not reproach you: I have satisfied myself in serving you, as you deserve for it—There's one can tell you how too, and so your servant—My Lord, you'll remember. [*To Lord George.*

[*Exit Miss Not.*

Lord W. Ha, ha, ha! Why, how now, friend! What, are you my rival?

Lord Geo. Ha, ha, ha! Why, faith I am very near being one of them; for I believe the child will think she has hard-luck, if the whole town is not so in a fortnight.

Lord W. But pr'ythee how came she to know I ever made you a confidant of my affair with her? I am afraid you have been thoughtless.

Lord Geo. No, by all that's honest—But she has told me more than you could tell me.

Lord W. What?

Lord Geo. That she herself told my Lady Wronglove of your appointment with her this afternoon, and (as I suppose you have since found) sent her in a hackney-coach after you.

Lord W. The devil!

Lord Geo. Nay, 'twas a home push, faith!

Lord W. Home, quotha! 'egad it's time for me to knock off, I shall never come up with her: but what could she propose by telling you of it?

Lord Geo. Why, a fresh lover, I suppose—She found me a little tardy here in addressing her; and imagining
' my

‘ my small virtue might proceed from a regard to you, to convince me of her indifference to you, she very fairly told me how she had served you, to open an easier passage in my conscience for my passion to her.

‘ *Lord W.* Sir, I give you joy.

‘ *Lord Geo.* And faith, Sir, I expect it, though not as you do, from the green youth of her person, but the plump maturity of her understanding—in helping me to another.

‘ *Lord W.* Riddles!

‘ *Lord Geo.* To be short; I think I have bit the babe; for in return, to convince her of my indifference to Mrs. Conquest, I have imposed upon her to discover my real passion to Lady Gentle, before Mrs. Conquest’s face; and this, Sir, with your leave, is, upon my honour, all the use I design to make of her.

‘ *Lord W.* Faith, it is a glorious one—All Machiavel was boys-play to it.—Look you, Sir, if you have a fancy to the small remainder of her composition—Pray be free——

‘ *Lord Geo.* Dear Sir, not so much as the squeeze of her little finger: but I thought I might make bold with her virtue, and not rob your *goût* of a morsel.

‘ *Lord W.* Not a step farther, faith—I shall e’en turn about my nag and go home: a little humble hare-hunting, by way of taking the air, I can make a shift to come up to; but to scamper, neck or nothing, after a mad galloping jade of a hind, that will run you strait an end out of a country, requires a little more mettle than I am master of.

‘ *Lord Geo.* Come, come! you are sportsman enough to know, that as pride first humbles a coquette into the loosest encouragements to gain a man, so the same pride very often piques her into the granting the last favour, rather than lose him.’

Lord W. I am sorry I have made this rout about it, Sir; I expect to have my wife shock me too.

Lord Geo. Oh! pray, how did you come off? Did my Lady see you in the coach?

Lord W. I am not sure, faith; but whether she did or not, she shan’t convince me she did.

Lord Geo. Where did you leave her?

Lord

Lord W. Why, as soon as the child told me from her coach, that my wife was in another behind me, I advised her to go off; then whipt up my wooden glasses, and stood cross the road, to prevent the nymph's being followed; when she was out of sight, I ordered the fellow to drive to town as fast as Black and Bay could lay legs to the ground: and having the fortune of better horses, I just got time enough to stop, and give a fellow a guinea to cut the braces of the coach that came after me; which, while I drove gently on, I saw him do; so even came away, and left her Ladyship fairly overset in the middle of a swinging shower, at Hyde-Park-Corner.

Lord Geo. How shall she get home?

Lord W. Umh! She will have wit enough in her passion, I presume, to send for another coach; or, if not, it will be a very pretty cool walk over the park for her.

Lord Geo. What an unfortunate creature is a jealous wife! [*Brush whispers Lord Wronglove, and Exit.*]

Lord W. My wife's come home: now, if you have a curiosity, you shall see how I'll manage her.

Lord Geo. Pray, Sir, don't let me be witness of your conjugal douceurs; but if you please, I'll step into the next room a little, for I have two or three words to write; I must appoint the Count to meet me at Lady Gentle's after the play.

Lord W. Do so then—Take this key, you'll find paper in the bureau.

Lord Geo. Quick, quick, I hear her—*Bon Voyage.*

[*Exit Lord George.*]

Enter Lady Wronglove, as from the Street, in a Hood and Scarf, and her Petticoat pinned up.

Lady W. So, Sir, you are come home, I see.

Lord W. Yes, Madam, and you have been abroad, I see; will you never give over making yourself ridiculous to the very servants? Was this a dress to go out in, or a condition for a woman of your quality to walk home in? Death! what must people take you for?—For shame!

Lady W. My Lord, when a husband grows monstrous, a wife may well become ridiculous.

Lord W. Look you, Madam, while your jealousy keeps

keeps within bounds, I shall take little notice of it: but when its idle extravagancies break upon my reputation, I shall resent it as I ought. You may think me an ill husband, if you please; but I won't have the world think so, till I give them occasion.

Lady W. Insolent!

Lord W. I thought I had told you in the morning of a foolish letter, that was brought by mistake to me instead of my servant: your not taking my word, methinks was not over-civil, Madam: and your since dogging my servant instead of me, to the very place of appointment, was extremely obliging. The fellow has confessed to me, since he came home, that in his fear to be seen, he got your coach overthrown in the middle of the highway, while you ridiculously pursued him: a mighty reputable figure you must make, while you were getting out of it, no doubt!

Lady W. Come, come, my Lord, I have not lost my senses yet—I followed you, and saw you in the coach, when the confident creature reached out to you from another, to tell you, I suppose, that I was just behind you. You may wrong me, but you can never blind me.

[In a scornful smile.]

Lord W. Look you, Madam, that manner in speaking shews too much transport, and—colour does not become your face.

Lady W. *[Taking him up short.]* Some people think it does now: all men are not of your opinion, 'my Lord, 'my complexion may not please you perhaps; but I 'have known many a lover find an appetite only from a 'husband's losing it.'

Lord W. I won't suppose, Madam, you'll suffer any man to like you more than he ought to do.

Lady W. Oh, Sir! don't you depend more upon my discretion, than your own——'We wives, as well as 'our husbands, love to have some idle body or other to 'flatter us into humour, when the time hangs upon our 'hands.

'*Lord W.* You are pleasant, Madam.'

Lady W. Marriage would be an unfortunate frolick, indeed, if a woman's happiness were to die with her husband's inclinations.

Lord

Lord W. Waggish, I protest.

Lady W. Oh, there's nothing like a modish husband to refine the unbred virtue of a wife into all the pretty liberties in fashion.

Lord W. Good company, or let me die.

Lady W. I knew the day, when my Lady Honey-Moon would have blushed, almost in tears, at the alarm of a bare civil thing from any man but her husband; but from the well-bred example of his conscience, she has now most undauntedly got the better of her own, and stands buff at the head of the mode, without the least tincture of virtue to put her out of countenance.

Lord W. Why now, my dear——this is something; if you'd but always treat me with good-humour, you and I should never dispute as long as we live.

Lady W. Monster!

Lord W. For, you know, I have often told you, that if ever I should be weak enough to wrong you, a gentle complaint and good words would work me to any thing; when the pride of an insolent reproach would be but adding fuel to my folly, and make it flame the higher; but now I see that you are convinced that your suspicions were groundless, and that you are sensible, if they had not, defiance is utterly the wrong way to reform me: you shall find that all this tenderness and temper that you now treat me with, shall not be thrown away upon me.

Lady W. Insolent! provoking devil!

Lord W. I am glad we are friends with all my heart; I am, upon my soul, my dear.

Lady W. Villain!

Lord W. Oh, my dear! I had like to have forgot one thing, and since we are now come to a right understanding, I'll tell you: if ever you and I should happen to disagree, I beg of you, for your own sake, never give me any hard language; because there is no being certain, but in one of my brutal fits, I may let you cry yourself half blind for it, before I forgive you.

Lady W. Forgive me! I have a soul as much above the fear of you, as are your injuries below my scorn——I laugh at both.

Lord

Lord W. Ay but, my life, I would not have you trust me; for if ever you should accuse me wrongfully, I know my foolish temper so well, that, in my conscience, in pure spight, I believe—I believe—I believe I should keep a mistress.

Lady W. My Lord, this affectation won't redress my injuries; and however you deceive yourself, in your unquestioned power of doing wrong, you'll find there is a force of justice yet above your strength, a curb of law to check abandoned principles; nor am I yet so poor in interest or friends, 'jealous of my wrongs,' as of their 'own,' but I may find a time and place to make your proud heart humble for this usage.

Lord W. Death! and hell! dare to insult me with such another thought, these walls shall mark your bounds of liberty: this dismal house becomes your prison, debarred of light; and let me see that big-mouthed friend, or interest then, than can unlock a husband's power to keep you—When my wife talks warmly to me, she shall ask my leave first.

Lady W. Never—Such leave as you took to give me cause for't, I take to tell you of it.

Lord W. 'We are upon an equal foot: I won't have you so familiar in your accusations.' Be warned, and stir me not to use my power: you may sooner make me an ill husband than a tame one.

Lady W. So may you me a wife, my Lord: and what is't binds me more to bear an injury, than you? I have seen you laugh at passive obedience between a prince and people, and in the sense of nature, I can't see why 'tis not as ridiculous from a wife to an injurious husband.

Lord W. Their hazard is at least unequal: a people may be freed by struggling; but when a fettered wife presumes, the insulted husband's sure to make her chain the shorter.

Lady W. Her mind, at least, is more at liberty; the ease of giving shame for pain, stands yet in some degree of pleasure: the wretch that's basely killed, falls better satisfied to see his murderer bleed.

Lord W. Nay, now I crave your mercy, Madam, I find I mistook your grievance all this while—It seems
' then

‘ then, to be refused the pleasure of reproaching, is
 ‘ what you can’t bear——and when you are wronged,
 ‘ to lock up your tongue is the greatest cruelty your
 ‘ tyrant can impose upon you——If that be the hard-
 ‘ ship, pray be easy, when you please ; in the name of
 ‘ thunder go on, spare no invectives, but open the spout
 ‘ of your eloquence, and see with what a calm con-
 ‘ nubial resignation, I will both hear and bow to the
 ‘ chastisement.

‘ *Lady W.* Poor helpless affectation ! This shew of
 ‘ temper is as much dissembled as your innocence—I
 ‘ know, in spite of all your hardened thoughts, to hear
 ‘ your guilt confronted thus, must gall your soul : pa-
 ‘ tients don’t use to smile while their fresh wounds are
 ‘ probed, nor criminals to laugh under the smart of ju-
 ‘ stice.

‘ *Lord W.* My life, you begin extremely well, and
 ‘ with abundance of fire, only give me leave to observe
 ‘ one thing to you, that as you draw towards an end,
 ‘ don’t forget the principal thing you were going to say.

‘ *Lady W.* How poor ! how low ! how wretched is a
 ‘ guilty mind, that stands without a blush the shock of
 ‘ accusation !

‘ *Lord W.* Hold, Madam, don’t mistake me neither ;
 ‘ for I allow you to accuse me of nothing, but of what
 ‘ we fine gentlemen think is next to nothing——a little
 ‘ gallantry.

‘ *Lady W.* Audacious ! horrid wretch ! and dare you
 ‘ own the fact ?

‘ *Lord W.* Own it ! no, no, if I were guilty I would
 ‘ not do that ; but I give you leave to suppose me so,
 ‘ because, by what you say, I fancy it would ease your
 ‘ heart to reproach me ; though methinks——its very
 ‘ hard that demonstration won’t convince you of my in-
 ‘ nocence.

‘ *Lady W.* Demonstration !

‘ *Lord W.* Demonstration ! Ay, demonstration : for,
 ‘ if I were guilty, pray who could better know it than
 ‘ myself ? and have not I told you with my own mouth
 ‘ it is no such thing ? Pray, what demonstration can be
 ‘ plainer ?

Lady W. I find you are resolved to stand it to the last ;
 but

THE LADY'S LAST STAKE.

49

but since I know your guilt, I owe myself the justice to resent it. When the weak wife transgresses, the husband's blood has leave to boil; his fury's justified by honour! the wrong admits no measure of amends; his reputation bleeds, and only blood can staunch it. And I must tell you, Sir, that in the scales of conscience, the husband's falsehood is an equal injury, and equal too you'll find the wife's resentment: 'henceforth be sure you're private in your shame; for if I trace you to another proof, expect as little mercy for the wretch you doat on, as you yourself would shew to the felonious lover.
'My wrongs through her shall shoot you to the soul,'
'You shall not find I am an injur'd fool. [Exit.]

Lord W. Well said, 'egad, if she could but love with half the fire she can hate, I wou'd not desire to pass my time in better company——Not but between me and myself, our dear comforts have something a hard time on't: we are a little apt to take more liberty than we give——but people in power don't care to part with it, whether it be lawful or no; 'to bear her insolence is positively intolerable——What shall I do with her? I know no way of making an honourable peace, better than sword-in-hand——E'en let her pride swell till it bursts, and then 'tis possible she may bear reason.'

Enter Brush.

Brush. Here's Sir Friendly Moral, my Lord.

Lord W. Desire him to walk in—[Exit Brush.] I hold fifty pounds the old gentleman comes to school me about his young kinswoman; if he does, I know he'll do it handsomely: for, give him his due, with all the severity of principles, he is as good-humoured, and as well bred, as if he had no principles at all.

Enter Brush with Sir Friendly.

Sir Fr. My Lord, I am your most humble servant.

Lord W. Sir Friendly! this is kind indeed! Chairs there——Well! how goes the gout, Sir?

Sir Fr. In troth very untowardly; for I can hardly walk with it——Will your Lordship give me leave——

Lord W. To stand upon any thing but ceremony.

Enter Lord George from the inner Room.

Lord Geo. Nuncle, I am glad to see you.

Sir

Sir Fr. Hah ! Monsieur Brilliant, and in a sober vif after fun-fet !

Lord Geo. Oh, dear Sir, I am grown a fellow of the moft retired converfation in the world.

Sir Fr. Your reformation is not of a very long date, I believe ; ‘ for, if I don’t miftake, I faw you but yefterday at the Thatched-houfe, with a napkin upon your head, at the window, in a very hopelefs company !

‘ *Lord Geo.* How ! how, nuncle ! two men of title, and a foreign count, hopelefs company !

‘ *Sir Fr.* Moft deplorable ! Your Count’s a counter, and only paffes for what he is in his own country ; your men of title are indeed no counterfeit, every body fees into their worth, Sir Bubble Squander, and my Lord Lawlefs : but the sparks I obferved you with, were Done-firft the jockey, and Touchum the gamefter ; as infamous a fellow as ever broke the head of a box-keeper.

‘ *Lord Geo.* Pfah ! People that play keep all company ; but to let you fee I had my account in it, I had a mind to bite Sir Bubble in a horfe-match, and fo took thefe two fellows with me, to let him into the fecret.

‘ *Sir Fran.* A fine inftance of our modifh morals indeed ! To make one’s confcience a bawd, to the difhonour of biting a wretch of perhaps an hundred pounds ! What a fhame it is the world fhould not call it by its true name, cheating, that men of honour might not be guilty of it !

‘ *Lord Geo.* Oh, Sir, the name I grant you would ftrangely alter the cafe ; but people of rank and power, nuncle, are wifer, and nick-name one another’s infirmities.—Therefore ’tis your little cheat, you fee, that’s fent to Newgate ; your great one only turned out of place.

‘ *Sir Fr.* Nay, ’tis a comfortable world indeed, for knaves, fools, fops, cowards, and fharpers.

‘ *Lord Geo.* Right ! their quality and quantity keep them in countenance.

‘ *Sir Fr.* So that a man may be any one, or all of them, and yet appear no monfter in moft of the public places about town.

‘ *Lord W.* But with fubmiffion, Sir Friendly, if I meet

‘ meet with a man of figure, that talks agreeably over a
 ‘ glafs, what in the name of good-nature have I to do
 ‘ with his morals ?

‘ *Sir Fr.* ’Tis in my opinion, as dishonest for a man of
 ‘ quality to converse with a well-bred rogue, as ’twere
 ‘ unsafe for a woman of reputation to make a compa-
 ‘ nion of an agreeable strumpet. People’s taste and
 ‘ principles are very justly measured by their choice of
 ‘ acquaintance : besides, a man of honour owes the dis-
 ‘ countenance of a villain, as a debt to his own dignity.
 ‘ How poor a spirit must it shew in our people of for-
 ‘ tune, to let fellows, who deserving hanging every
 ‘ other day in their lives, die at last of sitting up in the
 ‘ best company ? But, my Lord Wronglove, I am afraid
 I have a pardon to ask ; the last time we three were to-
 gether, did not the old fellow a little overshoot himself ?
 I thought, when we parted, I had been freer in my ad-
 vice than became me.

Lord W. So far from it, that your very manner of
 speaking makes your most severe reproofs an obligation.

‘ *Sir Fr.* Nay, I was only concerned for what I had
 ‘ said to your Lordship : as for this spark, I no more
 ‘ mind his caprice, than I believe he does any thing I
 ‘ can say to him : and yet the knave has something of
 ‘ good-humour in him, that makes me I can’t help
 ‘ sometimes throwing away my words upon him. But
 ‘ give me your hand ; in troth, when I was at your
 ‘ years I had my follies too.

‘ *Lord Geo.* Ay ! Now you come to us, nuncle, and
 ‘ I hope you’ll have good-nature enough, not to expect
 ‘ your friends to be wiser than you were.

‘ *Sir Fr.* Perhaps I don’t expect it, but in troth, if
 ‘ they should be wiser—for my soul I can’t see any
 ‘ harm it would do them : and though I love with all my
 ‘ heart to see spirit in a young fellow, yet a little pru-
 ‘ dence won’t poison him : and if a man that sets out in-
 ‘ to life, should carry a little general esteem with him,
 ‘ as part of his equipage, he’d make never the worse fi-
 ‘ gure at the end of his journey.

‘ *Lord Geo.* We young fellows that ride post never
 ‘ mind what figures we make.

‘ *Sir Fr.* Come ! come ! let’s not contend for victory,

‘but truth—I love you both—and would have all that know you do so too——Don’t think because you pass for men of wit, and modish honour, that that’s all you owe to your condition: Fortune has given you titles to set your actions in a fairer light, and Nature understanding, to make them not only just, but generous. Troth, it grieves me to think you can abuse such happiness, and have no more ambition, or regard to real honour, than the wretched fine gentlemen in most of our modern comedies!—Will you forgive me—Upon my faith, I don’t speak thus of you to other people, nor would I now speak so to you, but to prevent other people’s speaking thus of you to me.’

Lord Geo. Nuncle, depend upon’t I’m always pleased to hear you.

‘*Lord W.* I take it kindly.’

Sir Fr. Then first to you, Lord George—What can you think the honest part of the world will say of you, when you have seduced the innocent inclinations of one of the best wives, from perhaps one of the best husbands in the world?—To be plain, I mean my Lady Gentle.—You see, my Lord, with all your discretion, your design’s no secret.

Lord Geo. Upon my life, nuncle, if I were half the fellow you think me, I should be ashamed to look people in the face.

Sir Fr. Fie, fie! how useless is the force of understanding, when only age can give us virtue?

Lord W. Come, Sir, you see he’s incorrigible, you’ll have better success with me, I hope; for, to tell you the truth, I have few pleasures that you can call it virtue in me to part with.

Sir Fr. I am glad to hear it, my Lord,—I shall be as favourable as I can; but, since we are in search of truth, must freely tell you, the man that violates himself the sacred honours of his wife’s chaste bed (I must be plain, my Lord) ought at least to fear, as she’s the frailer sex, the same from her; the injury to her strikes deeper than the head, often to the heart. And then her provocation is in nature greater; and injured minds think nothing is unjust that’s natural. This ought to make a wise man tremble: for, in the point of real honour, there’s very little

little difference between being a cuckold, and deserving to be one. And to come a little closer to your Lordship's case, to see so fine a woman as my Lady Wronglove, even in her flower of beauty, slighted for the unblown pleasures of a green-sick girl; besides the imprudent part, argues at best a thin and sickly appetite.

Lord W. Sir Friendly, I am almost ashamed to answer you. 'Your reproach indeed has touched me,' I mean for my attempts upon your young kinswoman; but because 'tis not fit you should take my word after my owning so unfair an action, here's one can bear me witness, that not half an hour before you came in, I had resolved never to pursue her more.

Sir Fr. My Lord, I came not to reproach you with a wrong to me, but to yourself: had the girl had no relation to me, I still had said the same; not but I now am doubly bound to thank you.

Lord Geo. And now, nuncle, I'll give you a piece of advice: dispose of the child as soon as you can; rather under-match her than not at all. For, if you'll allow me to know any thing of the mathematics, before she's five weeks older she will be totally unqualified for an ape-leader: this you may as positively depend upon, as that she is of the feminine gender.

Sir Fr. I am pretty well acquainted with the ripeness of her inclinations, and have provided for them, unless some such spark as you (now my Lord has laid them down) whips up the cudgels in the mean time.

Lord Geo. Not I, upon honour, 'depend upon't; her person's quite out of my *gout*, nor have I any more concern about it, than I have to know who will be the next King of Poland, or who is the true original inventor of strops for razors.'

Lord W. Sir Friendly, I own I have been no stranger in other places to the follies you have charged me with; yet I am so far inclined to part with them, that were it possible I could be, my own way, and properly, reconciled to my wife, I would not with a thought of happiness beyond it.

Sir Fr. My Lord, I know her temper and her spirit.

Lord W. Oh, human patience can't bear it!

Sir Fr. I warrant you; a wise man will bear a greater

weakness from a woman. And, since I find your good-nature is not wholly disoblige'd, I could wish, for both your sakes, I had your Lordship's secret leave to talk with her.

Lord W. Umph! Could not it as well be done without my leave, Sir Friendly? I should not care to have her think I made advances——

Sir Fr. Oh! I am a friend to both, and will betray neither of you.

Enter Brush.

Brush. Sir, there's a gentleman come out of the city, and stays at your house to speak with you.

Sir Fr. I'll wait on him——My Lord, will you excuse me?

Lord W. I could rather wish your business would, Sir Friendly.

Sir Fr. Upon my word, my Lord, 'tis urgent. This man brings me money. I am discharging myself of my guardianship to Mrs. Conquest, and my business is now to pay her in the last sum of her fortune.

Lord Geo. What's the sum total, nuncle, if a man should happen to set a price upon his liberty?

Sir Fr. Come, come, the liberties you value, my Lord, are not worth keeping. An honest smile from the good-humour of that girl is worth all the sodden favours of your whole seraglio. Will four thousand pounds do any good, my Lord?

Lord Geo. Look you, Sir Friendly, marriage is very honourable and wise, and—and—it—it—it's—it's an extreme fine thing, no doubt; but I am one of those frank-hearted fellows that had rather see my friends happy that way than myself——My Lord, your servant——If you are going home, nuncle, I'll carry you, for I have business at your house too.

Lord W. Who's there? Light out!——Lord George, is your new chariot at the door?

Lord Geo. Yes; and positively the prettiest that ever roll'd in the rear of six horses.

Lord W. I have a mind to look at it. [*Exeunt.*]

End of the THIRD ACT.

ACT

A C T IV.

SCENE, Lord Wronglove's House.

Enter Lady Wronglove and Mrs. Hartshorn.

LADY WRONGLOVE.

WAS Sir Friendly within?*Hartf.* Yes, Madam; he gives his humble service, and says he will certainly be at home at eight o'clock, and expect your Ladyship's commands.*Lady W.* Did the fellow give my service to my Lady Gentle too, and to Mrs. Conquest?*Hartf.* He did not say any thing of it to me, Madam.*Lady W.* What blockhead is it you always find out to neglect my business? Whom did you send?*Hartf.* James, Madam.*Lady W.* Call him in; I find I must always give my orders myself.*Hartf.* He's gone to the play to keep your Ladyship's places.*Lady W.* The play! Sure the people are all out of their senses! Why, I shan't go to-day.*Hartf.* He said, Madam, your Ladyship ordered him, right or wrong, to keep places every Saturday.*Lady W.* Psha!*Hartf.* I hope your Ladyship is not angry at me, Madam.*Lady W.* No, pr'ythee, I don't know what I say.*Hartf.* Ah, poor lady![*Aside.*]*Lady W.* What is the play to-day?*Hartf.* The—the—Husband, something—the Careful Husband, I think, Madam.*Lady W.* The Careful! the Careless Husband, you mean sure—tho' I never saw it.*Hartf.* Yes, yes, Madam—it's that play that my Lady Wear-breeches hates so, that I saw once, Madam; where there's a lady comes in, and catches her husband fast asleep with her own woman, and then takes her handkerchief off her neck, and then goes softly to him—*Lady W.* And strangles him in his sleep?*Hartf.*

Hartf. No, Madam.

Lady W. Oh, strangles the woman?

Hartf. No, Madam, she only lays it gently over his head, for fear he should catch cold, and so steals out of the room, without so much as offering to wake him.

Lady W. Horrid! And what became of the poor-spirited creature?

Hartf. Oh, Madam! when the gentleman wakes, and finds that his lady has been there without taking any notice of it to him, he grows so sham'd of his wickedness, and so sensible of her virtues, that he afterwards proves the civilest gentleman, and the best husband in the world to her.

Lady W. Foh! Were I an husband, a wife with such a tame, enduring spirit would make me scorn her, or, at best, but sleep at her groveling virtue—Is my Lord within?

Hartf. Yes, Madam, he's reading in his closet.

Lady W. Any thing, the dullest solitude, more pleases him than my company—Hoh! [Sighing.]

Hartf. Ah, poor lady! it makes me weep to see her grieve at heart so. [Aside.]

Lady W. Go to my Lord, and say I desire to speak with him. [Exit Hartshorn.] Oh, for a draught of cold indifference, to chill this lukewarm love, that would rebel against my peace, that I may leave without a pang this hardened wretch, and to the rude riots of his gross desire give him up for ever!—He comes; keep down, my swelling heart, and let tame patience speak my wrongs for once; 'for wrongs like mine need not the force nor fire of passion to present them.'

Enter Lord Wronglove.

Lord W. I am told, Madam, you desire to speak with me.

Lady W. Yes, my Lord; and which, perhaps, you'll not dislike, to talk with you in temper too, if you're in temper to receive it.

Lord W. While you're in temper, Madam, I shall always think I owe you the respect of keeping mine; and when you are not, I shall keep it in respect to myself.

Lady W. My Lord, I never had occasion to question your knowing what you ought to do; but you are not bound,

bound, you'll say, to make your inclination a slave to your understanding; 'and therefore 'tis possible you won't want arguments to convince me that a wife's obliged to bear all faults in a husband that are not in her power to punish.

Lord W. Proceed.

Lady W. Now I must tell you, my Lord, when any one injures me because 'tis in their power, I shall certainly hate them for't, because that's in my power.

Lord W. I am sorry you think it worth your while to make use of so unprofitable a power.

Lady W. I am sorry I have occasion for it.

Lord W. Umh—that's half a question—But go on.

Lady W. And therefore, since I find the more I endeavour to detect you, the more you persist in your resolution to use me ill; since my honest resentment, and your actions, have made us a mutual grievance to one another, I see no way in nature to make us mutually just, but by cancelling our obligations. If we agree to part, the uneasy bond of wife or husband no longer lies in force against us. And since I am contented to remit the breaches you have made of the conditions on your part, I suppose you won't think it inconsistent with your reputation to allow me part of the fortune I brought you, as a separate maintenance.

Lord W. When you and I part, Madam, you shall leave none of your fortune behind you. But should I now yield to your proposal, the world might think I owned the breaches you accuse me of, and then 'twere only parting to indulge your pride. But if the sincere sorrow of your humble heart can find a way to make it as consistent with my reputation as my private peace, I'll sign to your relief this moment.

Lady W. Your reputation! No, my Lord, that's your business to secure; I've taken care to let my actions justify my own. If you have been remiss, the fault's not mine to answer. I'm glad at least to see you own where 'tis your weakness lies.

Lord W. To bear such insults from a wife is not perhaps my least weakness. Nay, I've another too, which I might own with equal blushing: a tame forgiving pity of
your

your unfortunate temper, that pauses yet to take the advantage of your distraction to undo you.

Lady W. Horrid! insolent assertion, to do me injury, and call my innocent endeavours at redress distraction!

Lord W. Innocent! Away! 'You take the rudest, fiercest, falsest means for reparation, if you had a wrong.

'*Lady W.* If I had! Insupportable! To be out-faced that my own eyes deceive me!

'*Lord W.* Death and confusion!——Suppose your wrongs were true——think what they are——I speak 'em with a modest tongue, and blush at all this redness of resentment.

Lady W. Nay, now, my Lord, we are past all argument.

'*Lord W.* 'Tis fit we should be so. The subject ought to be below your thoughts. Don't misuse your pride, till I am taught to think you've none. Death! I've known the spirit of a strumpet in the misfortunes of her slighted love shew more than you; who, tho' her heart was bleeding with the inward pain, yet to her lover's face took pride and ease to seem concernless at his falsehood.

'*Lady W.* My Lord, your having a better opinion of such creatures than your wife is no new thing to me: but I must tell you, I have not deserved your vile comparison, nor shall I ever buy an husband's inclination, by being like the horrid things you doat on.'

Lord W. Come, since you are incorrigible, I'll give your pride the vain relief you ask for. 'Your temper is at last intolerable, and now 'tis mutual ease to part with you. Yet to let you see 'tis not in the power of all your follies to provoke me to an injustice, I will not trust your wishes with your own discretion;' but if you have a friend that's not an enemy to me, whose honesty and sense you dare depend on, let him be umpire of the conditions of what's proper both of us should yield to when we part, and here's my hand, my word, my honour, I'll sign them on demand.

Lady W. Keep but your word in this, my Lord, and I have henceforth no injuries to reproach you with.

Lord W. If in the least article I shrink from it, conclude

clude me then the mean, the servile wretch, you'd make me.

Lady W. I'd make you just, my Lord; if that's my fault, I never shall repent it.

Lord W. We are now no longer our own judges, Madam; name the person you appeal to.

Lady W. Oh, my Lord! you can't be more in haste than I am. Sir Friendly Moral; and I think you can have no objection to his integrity. I appeal to him.

Lord W. The man in the world I would have chose myself; and if you please, Madam, I'll wait upon you to him immediately.

Lady W. No, my Lord, I think it won't be unseasonable if I speak with him alone first.

Lord W. With all my heart; in half an hour then I'll follow you.

Lady W. My Lord, you need not affect this indifference; I have provocations enough without it—I'll go, depend on't.

Lord W. I thought you had been gone, Madam——
[*She passes hastily by him.*] How now!

Enter Brush, who whispers Lord Wronglove.

Brush. Sir Friendly Moral desires to speak with your Lordship; he stays in the next room, and begs my Lady may not know he's here.

Lady W. [*Turning.*] What can that whisper mean? But I have done with jealousy.

Lord W. When your Lady's gone out, desire him to walk in. [*Exit Brush.*] In half an hour, as I told you, I'll positively be with you.

Lady W. Oh, my Lord! I shan't stay to interrupt your privacies. [*Exit.*]

Lord W. How unfortunate must this woman's temper be, when even this affectation of indifference is the greatest proof I ever received of her inclination!——'What can this come to?—By Sir Friendly's being here, I fancy she has been disclosing her grievance already; and when she has made the very worst of it, I am mistaken if his temper and understanding won't convince her, that 'tis below the pride and prudence of a wife to take so violent a notice of it—But here he comes.'

Enter

Enter Sir Friendly Moral.

Sir Friendly, your most humble servant. Come, we are alone, I guess your business—my wife has been talking with you.

Sir Fr. No, my Lord; and unless you give me your word to be secret, I dare not tell my business.

Lord W. Upon my honour.

Sir Fr. Then there, my Lord, I just now received that letter from her.

Lord W. [*Reads.*] “At last I find there’s no way of being easy in my life, but parting for ever with my Lord; and I would willingly do it in such a manner as might least blame me to the world. Your friendship to both our families will, I am sure, engage you to advise me in the safest method: therefore I beg you’ll be at home some time this evening, that I may speak with you; for life, as it is, is insupportable. I am, Sir, &c.”

Well, Sir Friendly, then I can tell you half your trouble’s over; for we have agreed to part already, and both have chosen you umpire of the conditions.

Sir Fr. How, my Lord! could passion be so far your master too?

Lord W. Why, faith, Sir Friendly, patience could endure it no longer. ’Twas her own proposal, and she found the way at last to provoke me to take her at her word.

Sir Fr. Her word! fie, fie! Because she’d lame her reputation to cripple yours, shall you revenge her folly on yourself? Come, come, your understanding ought to have more compassion for the misfortune of a weak woman’s temper.

Lord W. Oh, she’s implacable!

Sir Fr. That quality punishes itself, my Lord; and since the provocation’s yours, it might sometimes be ‘pardoned.’ Do but imagine how it must gall the heart of a woman of spirit, to see the loose coquettes of her acquaintance smile at the modish husband’s sleeping in a separate bed from her.

Lord W. Humph!—there’s something in what you say, I own—Not but you’ll laugh at me, should I tell you the true and honest occasion of it.

Sir

Sir Fr. Not if it be true and honest, my Lord.

Lord W. Upon my faith, it was not the least distaste of her person, but her being downright an intolerable bed-fellow.

Sir Fr. How do you mean?

Lord W. I could never sleep with her. For tho' she hates late hours, yet when she has seen me gape for bed, like a waiter at the Groom-Porter's in a morning, she would still reserve to herself the tedious decorum of being first solicited for her company; so that she usually contrived to let me be three quarters asleep, before she would do me the honour to disturb me. Then, besides this, I was seldom less than two nights in four, but in the very middle of my first comfortable nap, I was awakened with the alarm of tingle, tingle, for a quarter of an hour together, that you'd swear she wanted a doctor or a midwife; and by-and-by down comes Mademoiselle, with a single under-petticoat in one hand, and rubbing her eyes with t'other; and then, after about half an hour's weighty arguments on both sides, poor Mademoiselle is guilty of not having pulled the sheet smooth at her feet, by which unpardonable neglect, her Ladyship's little toe had lain at least two hours on the rack of a wrinkle, that had almost put her into a fever. This, when I civilly complained of, she said she must either be easy in the bed, or go out of it. I told her that was exactly my case; so I very fairly stepped into the next room, where I have ever since slept most profoundly, without so much as once dreaming of her.

Sir Fr. An unfortunate circumstance truly! But I see a little matter, my Lord, will part people that don't care for company.

Lord W. But, Sir Friendly (not to trouble you with a long particular of the provocations I had from her temper to run a roguing at first) suppose I have played the fool, is the fault unpardonable? Is a wife's reputation like an husband's, mean, or infamous, because she overlooks the folly?

Sir Fr. No. But did you, my Lord, ever give her any signs of a repentance?

Lord W. As far as I have thought the nature of the crime required. 'I've often received her moderate re-

F

'proaches

'proaches with a smile and raillery; given her leave to guess, in hopes her understanding would have smiled again, and pardoned it.'

Sir Fr. And what effect had that?

Lord W. Oh, none in nature!—'For, Sir, her pride has possessed her with so horrid an idea of the crime, that my making flight on't but the more incenses her; and when once her passion takes the liberty of her tongue to me, I neither spare authority nor ill-nature to provoke or silence her. This generally is our course of conversation;' and, for aught I see, if we should not agree upon parting, we are in as fair a way of heartily plaguing one another for life, as e'er a comfortable couple in Europe.

Sir Fr. My Lord, the thought's too melancholy to jest upon.

Lord W. Why, faith, I have so far a concern for her, that could any means of an accommodation be found that were not unfit for an husband to submit to, I should not yet refuse to come into it.

Sir Fr. Spoken like a man, my Lord!—How far the fault's in you I partly see: and when I have made the same enquiry into my Lady's grief, I doubt not then I shall be better able to advise.

Lord W. You've now an opportunity; for she's gone this very minute to my Lady Gentle's, to speak with you.

Sir Fr. 'Twere best to lose no time then, my Lord: I'll take my leave—Nay, no ceremony—

Lord W. No, I'm going part of your way—Upon my word. [Exeunt.]

SCENE changes to Lady Gentle's house.

Enter Lady Gentle reading a letter, and Mrs. Conquest.

Mrs. Con. I hope Sir William's well, Madam.

Lady Gent. Yes, very well, my dear, and desires his *baïsemains* to your Ladyship.

Mrs. Con. Does he say any thing of coming to town?

Lady Gent. No, nothing yet.

Mrs. Con. No!—Pray, Madam, don't you think his good worship begins to be a little fonder of fox-hunting than you could wish he were?

Lady

Lady Gent. I am always pleased while he's diverted—
If you saw his letters to me, you would not think I had
any reason to complain.

Mrs. Con. Nay, the world owns your Ladyship has the
perfect secret of making a good husband.

Lady Gent. Believe me, child, the matter's not so difficult
as people would have it. If you but knew what
trifles in the compliance of a wife's temper sooth a man
to fondness, you'd admire to what childish obstinacy so
many women owe their uneasiness.

Enter Miss Notable, crying.

Miss Not. Oh, oh!

Lady Gent. How now! what's the matter, my dear?

Miss Not. Oh, oh! Madam, Madam!

Mrs. Con. Bless me! what ails the child?

Miss Not. I have been so abused, so affronted!

Lady Gent. Abused! By whom, my dear?

Miss Not. That monster of men, my Lord George

Mrs. Con. My Lord George! [Brilliant.]

Miss Not. Oh, I can't speak for passion!

Lady Gent. I'm amaz'd! What has he done, child?

Miss Not. The most provoking, impudent thing that
ever was offered to a young creature, sure. Oh, oh!

Mrs. Con. [*Aside.*] This must be some strange thing,
indeed; for, if I don't mistake, her young Ladyship
thinks herself old enough for most sorts of impudence
that a man can offer her.

Lady Gent. Has he offered any love, or rudeness to you?

Miss Not. Oh, worse, worse, a thousand times!

Mrs. Con. Worse! What can that be, child?—Un-
less it be, that he has not made love to her? [*Aside.*]

Miss Not. Oh, Madam! 'tis not myself alone, but
your Ladyship, and Mrs. Conquest too, that are affronted.

Mrs. Con. Am I in? But it's no novelty to me. I
have so far the better of both of you, I am used to his
impudence, and know how to bear it.

Lady Gent. I am amazed! Pray, let's hear, child.

Miss Not. Oh, I could tear his flesh, for having such a
thought of me!

Lady Gent. What thought, my dear?

Miss Not. Oh, Madam! could any thing but the great-
est villain upon earth think to make me a procuress?

Lady Gent. Child ! you startle me !

Miss Not. Or any mortal, but from a most profligate principle of the most provoking vanity, nourish but the least living hope against your Ladyship's virtue ?

Lady Gent. How, child !

Miss Not. Or any monster, but the most ungrateful, most audacious of mankind, propose too, that I should discover his odious inclinations to your Ladyship, before the very face of one who innocently loves him ? Oh, I am past patience !——I think I do it bravely. [*Aside.*

[*Walks in disorder.*

Lady Gent. I'm all confusion !

Mrs. Con. If this girl's passion is not all an air, and his own contrivance, then will I be bound to endure the success of it. [*Aside.*

Lady Gent. His inclination ! and to me ! and yet proposed that you should discover it before Mrs. Conquest too ! To glory in such insolence !——This seems a contradiction.

Miss Not. Or else, said he, 'twill never be believed ; for having the idle reputation of liking one, I am obliged that both should know it, that she I really love may see I'm wholly free from my former passion.

Mrs. Con. This lie must be his own, by the extremity of its impudence. [*Aside.*

Lady Gent. But when he used my name, child, why were you not shocked at first ? Why did not you leave him to tell his idle story to the world ?

Miss Not. Oh, Madam ! that was what betrayed me into hearing him ; for when he first began he named no names ; that he reserved till last, till he had told me all, to clinch the secret with.

Lady Gent. But, pray, child, how did he begin it ?——What was his manner of first attempting you ?

Mrs. Con. Her Ladyship grows a little inquisitive, methinks. [*Aside.*

Miss Not. Oh ; with all the subtle softness that ever humble love inspired !——Then, of a sudden, rousing from his fear, he gave himself such an animated air of confidence, 'threw back his wig,' and cried aloud,

Why should she ashamed or angry be,
To be belov'd by me ?

Mrs.

Mrs. Con. What do you think of his modesty now, Madam?

Lady Gent. I am amazed, indeed!

Miss Not. Then he turned to me, pressed me by the hand, and, kneeling, begged my friendship, and threw into my lap such untold heaps of gold, forced upon my finger too a sparkling diamond, I thought must beggar him to purchase. But when I heard him close his impudent story with offering me a letter to give your Ladyship while Mrs. Conquest was by, I started up, and told him, Yes, my Lord, I'll do your errand; but without your letter, in another manner than your infamous principles have proposed it; my Lady shall know your passion, but know it as I do, to avoid, to loath, and scorn you for such a villainous thought. While I was saying this, I threw his filthy gold upon the floor, his letter into the fire, his diamond out of the window, and left him to gather them up as he pleased, without expecting an answer.

Lady Gent. Sure 'tis impossible a man should wear a face that could so stedfastly belie his heart.

Miss Not. So I was resolved to tell your Ladyship—— Besides, I thought it proper Mrs. Conquest should know his brutality to her too.

Mrs. Con. Oh, I am mightily obliged to you, my dear; but I knew him before.

Miss Not. Ha! how affectedly indifferent the vain thing is! [Aside.]

Lady Gent. My dear, I'm at a loss how far to doubt, or to believe this folly of him. Pray, advise me.

[To Mrs. Conquest.]

Mrs. Con. If your Ladyship would take my opinion, I'd be entirely easy; I'd neither doubt or believe any thing of the matter, till I had it confirmed from his own behaviour.

Miss Not. I can't bear this. She shan't be so easy—— I'll tell her the whole truth of his addressing to me, but I'll humble her. [Aside.]

Lady Gent. Now, you know he was to be here with other company at cards to-night; but if you'll do me the favour to sit with me, I'll keep my chamber, say I'm indisposed, and see no company at all. What think you?

Mrs. Con. I think it won't be worth that trouble, Madam.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Madam, the company's come.

Lady Gent. Is my Lord George there?

Serv. Yes, Madam.

Lady Gent. What shall we do now?

Mrs. Con. By all means go and receive him among the rest, as you used to do, and take no notice of any thing. I'll wait upon your Ladyship in two minutes.

Lady Gent. If you don't, I shall certainly betray myself; I'll come and fetch you. *[Exit.*

Mrs. Con. As you please, Madam. I have observed a thoughtful smile upon this girl's face, that makes me fancy her secret is but half out yet. If I guess right, I'll e'en pique her little pride till she tells me, for I know the chit does not care for me. *[Aside.*

Miss Not. Oh! Mrs. Vanity's a little upon the humdrum at last, I see; I'll make her sob before I have done with her. Mrs. Conquest, you seem a little concerned about this matter; now, if I were you, I'd take no manner of notice of it, he should not have the pride to think 'twas in his power to give me a moment's uneasiness.

Mrs. Con. My dear, you advise me very well; but upon my word, I am not uneasy.

Miss Not. Pooh! that's such a jest! as if you did not love my Lord George.

Mrs. Con. Did he ever tell you I did?

Miss Not. Tell me!——No; but one sees that well enough.

Mrs. Con. Why then, if I do love him, child, you may depend upon't, it's only from the assurances I have of his loving me only.

Miss Not. But since you see (as the world will too in a little time) how false these assurances are, had not you better seem to leave him, than lie under the scandal of his leaving you?

Mrs. Con. No, child; I'll still keep up my pretensions, if it be only to hinder other vain creatures from coming into hopes of him: for I know, were I once to own myself disengaged, then every impertinent coquet in town would be giving airs to him.

Miss Not. Was ever any thing so stupidly vain?——*[Aside.]*——Lard! Madam, you have a mighty opinion of

of your perfections sure, to think it impossible a man can be false to you : some women would ha' been a-top of the house by this time, if they had only heard of their lover's common civility to another. You are strangely happy sure, when his owning a passion to your friend, before your face, can't make you uneasy ; heh ! heh !

Mrs. Con. Methinks, child, my want of jealousy from what you've said, gives you a little uneasiness. I should be loth to think his idle way of raillery had taught you to think of love so soon.

Miss Not. So soon ! I suppose, Madam, if I had the forwardness of your Ladyship's inclination, I might produce as good proofs of his passion for me, as you can of his constancy to you.

Mrs. Con. So, she's stirred. I must have the rest on't. [*Aside.*] His passion to thee, love ! that were impossible. Have a passion for any thing so incapable to conceive it ! Why love's a thing you won't be fit to think of these two years.

Miss Not. Not think of it ! I'd have you know, Madam, there are men in the world that think me as fit for a lover as your Ladyship.

Mrs. Con. So, now its coming. [*Aside.*]

Miss Not. And however unfit you think me, Madam, I'd have you, next time any man's idle raillery flatters you into a passion for him, don't let me know it ; I say, don't let me know it, for fear my unfitness should deceive your vanity, by taking him from you. Not think of it ! I shall live to see you burst with envy, Madam. Do you observe me ? Burst ! burst ! Not think of it !

Mrs. Con. Nay, now I am convinced. This passion, I dare swear, is real. He has certainly said some civil thing, before he was aware—But for what you said of him just now, to my Lady Gentle, my pretty one——

Miss Not. Pretty one ! Pray, Madam—Tho' I'm sorry I can't say the same of your Ladyship.

Mrs. Con. I say, all your late sobbing, and pretending to throw gold about the room, and diamonds out of the window, and all that stuff, my honey, I am now confirmed was all, from first to last, the pretty fiction of thy own little pride and jealousy, only to have the ease of giving me pain, from his supposed forsaking me.

Miss Not.

Miss Not. Ha, ha, ha ! I am glad to see your vanity so swelled, Madam ; but since I find 'tis your disease, I'll be your friend for once, and work your cure by bursting it. Know then, you have guessed a truth that has undone you : the part I've acted of his pretended passion to another, was, as you said indeed, a fiction all, and only played to give my pride the diversion of his owning to your face, how little he regards you. But know the fatal face to which you owe your ruin, was not my Lady Gentle's, that was my own invention, but mine ; not her, nor you, but me, and me alone he loves.—These poor unfit features have seduced him from you. And now let all the world, that sees how barbarously your vanity, or mine, has mistaken idle raillery for love, judge who's most fit to think of it. [Exit.

Mrs. Con. Now the mystery's unfolded. Oh ! this subtle devil ! how artfully has he fooled this forward girl to his assistance. Well, there's something in the bare-faced excess of his assurance that makes me smile : I'm loth to say he's impudent, but he has an undaunted modesty that's certain, and for that very one quality 'twill be worth my while not to trust him even with my Lady Gentle. Oh, Sir——

Enter Sir Friendly Moral.

Sir Fr. So, child, how stand affairs now ? Any fresh discovery ?

Mrs. Con. Only a trifling confirmation or two, Sir, of what we suspected before. Therefore what we do must be done quickly. Have you considered what I proposed, Sir ?

Sir Fr. In troth 'tis a wild thought, but you have a wild spark to deal with, and for ought I know, his own snares may be likeliest to hold him. Only take this general caution with you, that the warmth of your understanding don't carry you into any action, that the discretion of your sex can't answer.

Mrs. Con. Fear not, Sir, I know my man, and know myself.

Sir Fr. Then here's your letter writ, and sealed as you directed.

Mrs. Con. And here comes my Lady ; 'twill be now a fit occasion to make use of it.

Sir Fr. I'll leave you then.

Mrs. Con. When I have done with her, Sir, I would consult you farther.

Sir Fr. I'll expect you in my chamber.

[*Exit Sir Friendly.*]

Enter Lady Gentle.

Lady Gent. Oh, child, I'm glad I have found you.

Mrs. Con. What's the matter, Madam?

Lady Gent. I think I was never more provoked in my life.

Mrs. Con. Any thing from Lord George?

Lady Gent. Yes—something that makes me shudder at the thought.

Mrs. Con. Bless me!

Lady Gent. Something so grossly insolent in the over-respectfulness of his behaviour, such an affected awe when he but speaks to me, something that shews within his heart so vain, so arrogant a hope! it more provokes me than all the awkward follies of a barefaced impudence: and since I find he secretly presumes upon my knowing his odious secret, 'twill be therefore but equal justice to myself and you, to crush his idle hopes at once: for not to check, is to encourage them: and when once a woman's know to be followed, let her virtue be never so famed, or fortified, the good-natured town always concludes the lover successful.

Mrs. Con. You did not seem to understand his behaviour?

Lady Gent. I can't tell whether he understood me or no; but I could not help saying in a very grave manner, that whatever strait I put myself to, his thousand pounds should certainly be paid him next week.

Mrs. Con. And how did he take it?

Lady Gent. Oh! he is not to be put out of countenance, that I see, for he pressed me with a world of easy civility, not to give myself the least concern; for if I pleas'd, he would immediately give me a very fair chance to pay him, without ever drawing a line for it.

Mrs. Con. A fair chance! What was it?

Lady Gent. Why he offered me indeed at picquet such odds, as I am sure he is not able to give me; for Count Tally, who stood by, thought it so considerable an advantage,

vantage, that he begged he might go my halves, or what part of the money I pleased.

Mrs. Con. Well said, Count——This may come to something——She must play with him——for positively there's no other way of seeing a quick end to his hopes, or mine. [Aside.]

Lady Gent. The extravagance of his offer, I confess, surprised me; so I only told him, I'd consider on't, and came to you for advice.

Mrs. Con. Then certainly, Madam, take him at his word; and since you know his dishonest end, in offering such an advantage, e'en make use on't, and let his very baseness punish itself.

Lady Gent. As how?

Mrs. Con. Look you, the best way to disappoint his hopes, is first to raise 'em. Go to him this minute——Call for cards—and put on all the coquet airs imaginable: smile at his respect, and glance him out of his affected modesty. By this means you will certainly encourage his vanity, not only to the gallantry of letting you win your money again, but more than probably, of losing his own to you.

Lady Gent. I vow you tempt me strangely—I boggle at nothing, but those airs you speak of, I shall do it so awkwardly—

Mrs. Con. Pooh! I warrant you, trust to nature; it's nothing; one cannot set one's hair in a glass without 'em. If it were not a sure card, you can't think I'd advise you to play it, for my own sake.

Lady Gent. That, indeed, leaves me nothing to say. Well, upon your encouragement, I will venture, and the very moment I get home the sum I am out to him, I'll throw up my cards, and fairly tell him, I know when 'tis time to give over.

Mrs. Con. Admirable!

Lady Gent. Nay, and because I don't think I owe him the regard of declaring it myself, I'll go down into Sussex to-morrow morning, and leave you, if you think fit, to tell him the occasion.

Mrs. Con. No, Madam, to let your Ladyship see I think every thing is entirely safe under your discretion,

as my own, I am resolved to go out of town this moment.

Lady Gen. What do you mean ?

Mrs. Con. I have received a letter here from my brother Sir John, my twin-brother, Madam, whom I have not seen these nine years ; he arrived but last night from Italy, to take possession of his estate ; he's now at his house in Essex, and a little indisposed after his voyage ; he has sent his coach, and begs, if possible, I would be with him to-night.

Lady Gent. To-night ! impossible ! Go as early in the morning, child, as you please.

Mrs. Con. No, dear Madam, pardon me, the moon shines, and I had rather defer my sleep, than break it.

Lady Gent. Well, my dear, since you won't be persuaded, I wish you a good journey. I shall see you before you go.

Mrs. Con. I have just a moment's business with Sir Friendly, and then I'll wait upon your Ladyship.

[*Exit Lady Gentle.*

Well, there she goes—how she will come off I can't tell. The good woman, I dare swear, is truly innocent in her intentions, but good looking after, I fancy, can do her no injury : for Virtue, tho' she's of a noble spirit, and a great conqueror, 'tis true ; yet, as she's stout, alas ! we know she's merciful, and when sly Humility and Nature kneel hopeless to her unquestioned power, they look so pitiful, speak in such a gentle tone, and sigh their griefs with such submission, that cruel Virtue loses all its anger for compassion——compassion kindles hope, hope arms assurance, and then——tho' Virtue may have courage enough to give a stout knock with her heel, for somebody to come in——still, I say, if somebody should come in—'twould be ungrateful in any woman alive not to allow, that good attendance sometimes may do her virtue considerable service.

[*Exit.*

END of the FOURTH ACT.

ACT

A C T V.

S C E N E *continues.**Enter Lord George and Miss Notable.*

MISS NOTABLE.

SO, when I found that would not take down her vanity, I e'en told her the whole truth of the matter, that it was not my Lady Gentle, but her humble servant was her rival.

Lord Geo. Well said! What did Mrs. Conquest say upon that?

Miss Not. She did not say much, but the poor soul's gone out of town upon't.

Lord Geo. Out of town at this time of night! What do you mean?

Miss Not. Just as I say, Sir. Her brother, it seems, is come from travel, so the fullness of her stomach laid hold on that occasion, and she pretends she's gone to meet him. Now what I expect from you is this; since I see nothing but demonstration will heartily humble her Ladyship, you shall confess all I told her of your addressing to me, under your own hand, in a billet to me, which I'll inclose in a stinging letter from myself to her, and send it immediately.

Lord Geo. So, so, I am like to be drawn into a fine business here. The jest must not go so far neither.—The child has a strange vivacity in her good-nature.

[*Aside.*]

Miss Not. You pause upon't——

Lord Geo. Well, Madam, to let you see I scorn to profess more than I'll stand to, do you draw up the letter to your mind, I'll copy it, and—and—and—put the change upon you.

[*Aside.*]

Miss Not. Ay, now you say something; I'll about it immediately.

Lord Geo. Do so, I'll stay here till you have done it.

[*Exit Miss Not.*]

Who says I am not a provident lover? For now by that time

time my harvest of Lady Gentle is over, the early inclination I have sown in this girl will be just ripe and ready for the sickle. 'A true woman's man should breed his mistresses; as an old what-d'ye-call-um does young girls in a play-house, one under another, that he may have always something fit for the desire of several persons of quality.' But here comes my Lady Gentle—— Assurance, stand fast, and don't let the insolent awe of a fine woman's virtue look thee out of countenance.

Enter Lady Gentle.

Lady Gent. Come, come, my Lord, where do you run? the cards wait for you.

Lord Geo. I did not know your Ladyship had resolved to do me the honour of accepting the match I proposed you.

Lady Gent. Oh, your servant, grave Sir——you have a mind to be off on't, I suppose——but as mere a country girl as you think me, you'll find I am enough in the mode not to refuse a good offer, whether I deserve it or no.

Lord Geo. Coquet, by all that's lovely! [*Aside.*]——I must confess, Madam, I should be glad to see your Ladyship a little better reconciled to the diversions in fashion.

Lady Gent. And if I have any skill in faces, whatever solemn airs you give yourself, nobody is more a private friend to them than your Lordship.

Lord Geo. I can't disown a secret tenderness for every thing that ought to move the heart; but reputation should be always sacred: and he that does not take some care of his own, can never hope to be much trusted with other people's: for were a woman of condition generously to make that trust, what consequence upon earth could be more terrible to her, than the folly or baseness of her lover's exposing the secret?

Lady Gent. Very modish morals, upon my word; so that a prudent regard to her reputation is all the virtue you think a woman has occasion for——Fie, fie, I'll swear, my Lord, I took you for quite another man.

Lord Geo. I never was deceived in your Ladyship, for I always took you for a woman of the first understanding.

Lady Gent. Are you not a wicked creature? How can you have the assurance to think any woman that knows you, will become civil to you?

Lord Geo. I do think the most impudent thing a man can offer to a woman, is to ask the least favour of her before he has done something to deserve it; and so, if you please, Madam, we'll e'en sit down to picquet, and make an end of our argument afterwards.

Lady Gent. How blind is vanity! that this wretch can't see I fool him all this while! [*Aside.*] Well, my Lord, for once I won't baulk your gallantry.

Enter Sir Friendly.

Come, Sir Friendly, my Lord and I are going to picquet; have you a mind to look on a little;

Sir Fr. Troth, Madam, I have often looked on, and have as often wondered, to see two very good friends sit fairly down, and in cool blood, agree to wish one another heartily inconvenienced in their fortune.

Lord Geo. Oh fie! nuncle, that's driving the consequence too far.

Sir Fr. Not a jot. And 'tis amazing, that so many good families should daily encourage a diversion, whose utmost pleasure is founded upon avarice and ill-nature; for those are always the secret principles of deep play.

Re-enter Miss Notable, and winks at Lord George.

Lord Geo. I'll wait upon your Ladyship in a moment.

[*Exit.*]

Lady Gent. I don't know, play is a diversion that always keeps the spirits awake, methinks, whether one wins or loses.

Sir Fr. I have very little to say against a moderate use of it—but we grow serious. Pray, Madam, is my Lady Wronglove in the next room?

Lady Gent. I left her there, she was enquiring for you—Here she is.

Enter Lady Wronglove.

Well, Madam, what are they doing within?

Lady W. There's like to be no bank, I find, they are all broke into ombre and picquet.

Lady Gent. Your Ladyship is not for play then?

Lady

Lady W. Not yet, Madam ; I have a word or two with Sir Friendly, and I'll endeavour to wait on your Ladyship.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Madam, here's Sir John Conquest just come to town, he enquires for your Ladyship, or Sir Friendly Moral.

Lady Gent. Sir John ! What a mistake has poor Mrs. Conquest made now ? She went but an hour ago to meet him.

Sir Fr. Will your Ladyship give me leave to wait on him.

Lady Gent. If you please to give yourself that trouble, Sir Friendly. Pray desire him to walk in.

[Exit Sir Friendly.]

Is my Lord Wronglove come, Madam ?

Lady W. He said he would be here ; but you must not expect him the more for that.

Lady Gent. He does not much stand upon forms, indeed ; but he's extremely good-humoured when one has him.

Lady W. How can people taste good-humour, where there's no principle ?

Lady Gent. And what dull company would the strictest principle be without good-humour ?

Lady W. And yet the best temper's but a cheat without them.

Lady Gent. He must be a man indeed that lives without a fault ; but there are some, that 'tis always a woman's interest to overlook in a husband : our frowns may govern lovers, but husbands must be smiled on.

Lady W. I should despise the man that must be flattered to be just.

Lady Gent. Alas ! the price is very little, and let me tell you, Madam, the man that's just, is not to be despised.

Lady W. He that lives in a professed contempt of obligations, can never be beloved—'tis better to release them ; you'll shortly see me easy.

Lady Gent. I shall ever wish you so.

Enter Sir Friendly, with Mrs. Conquest, in man's habit.

Sir Fr. This, Sir, is my Lady Gentle. [*They salute.*]

Lady Gent. You are welcome to England, Sir.

Enter Lord George, who seeing Mrs. Conquest, whispers Sir Friendly.

Mrs. Con. I hope your Ladyship will excuse my unseasonable visit, but I rather chose to be troublesome, than flow in the acknowledgments I owe your Ladyship for the many favours to my sister.

Lady Gent. Mrs. Conquest and her friends are always welcome to me. My Lady Wronglove, pray know Sir John.

Sir Fr. My Lord George, and Sir John, will you give me leave to recommend a friendship between you?

Lord Geo. Sir, I shall be proud to embrace it.

Mrs. Con. 'Twill be a charity in a man of your Lordship's figure to give a raw young fellow a little countenance at his first arrival.

Lord Geo. Your appearance, Sir, I am confident, will never want a friendship among the men of taste, or the ladies.

Sir Fr. This young Lady, Sir John, is a near relation of mine; and if you have not left your heart abroad, will endanger it here as far as e'er a southern beauty of them all.

Mrs. Con. If the Lady's good-nature were equal to her beauty, 'twould be disposed of this minute.

Lord Geo. Faith he's a pretty fellow.

Miss Not. A sweet creature!

[*Aside.*]

Lady W. He's extremely like his sister.

Lady Gent. The very image of her!

Mrs. Con. We were both made at the same time, Ladies: I only wish she had been born to breeches too: for I fancy that wild humour of her's is dismally put to't under the confinement of petticoats.

[*Lady Wronglove goes to Sir Friendly.*]

Lady Gent. I find, Sir John, you are twins in your good-humour, as well as your persons.

Mrs. Con. We always took a liberty with one another,
Madam,

Madam, tho' I believe the girl may be honest at the bottom:

Lord Geo. Methinks you lose time with the young Lady, Sir John. [*Aside.*]

Mrs. Con. To tell you the truth, my Lord, I find myself a little too sharp set for a formal gallantry; I have had a tedious voyage, and would be glad of a small recommendation to any humble extempore favour.

Lord Geo. Faith I'm a little out of——gentlewomen myself at present: but if your occasions are not very pressing, I'll put you out of a despairing condition——I'll carry you behind the scenes, and there are ladies of all sorts, coquets, prudes, and virgins, they say, serious and comical, vocal——and instrumental.'

Mrs. Con. We shall find a time, my Lord.

Miss Not. I must have a friendship with him, that's poss. Let me see—ay, that will do it.—What a dear pleasure it is, be in what company one will, to have all the young fellows particular? [*Aside.*]

Mrs. Con. [*To La. Gent.*] I am afraid, Madam, we interrupt the diversion of the good company; I heard cards call'd for as we came in.

Lady Gent. If you please then, Sir John, we'll step into the next room—my Lady Wronglove, we'll expect you. [*Exeunt all but Lady Wronglove and Sir Fr.*]

Lady Wrong. I'll wait upon your Ladyship.

Sir Fr. I am sorry, Madam, to find the misunderstanding carried to such extremities.

Lady Wrong. After such usage, 'tis impossible to live with him.

Sir Fr. And have you, in your calmer thoughts, e'er weigh'd the miserable consequence of parting?

Lady Wrong. 'Twill shew the world, at least, I am not like the world; but scorn on any terms to endure the man that wrongs me. Since too he still persists in his defiance of my resentment, what remedy on earth have I but parting?

Sir Fr. Is there no cure for wounds but bleeding dead?—You'll say he has wrong'd you.—Grant it—that wrong has been severely punish'd in your severe resentment.

Lady Wrong. But still it has not cur'd the wrong.

Sir Fr. Then certainly 'twas wrong to use it.

Lady Wrong. I've been reduc'd to use it: nor cou'd I bear the loose, malicious floorings of the world, without a just resentment upon him.

Sir Fr. Nor wou'd I have you bear it—no; — but disappoint their empty fashionable malice, close up this unprofitable breach, 'tis still within your power, and fix him yet more firmly yours.'

Lady Wrong. Alas, 'tis now too late! We have agreed on other terms: he too, at last, is willing we shou'd part.

Sir Fr. Bury that thought: come, come, there's yet a gentler cure, cou'd you suppress your temper to go through it: this rash and fruitless struggling with a broken limb gives you but more outrageous pain, inflames the wound, and brings your very life of peace in danger: think what a glorious conquest it wou'd be, even in the face of the censorious and insulting world, to tame this wanderer, whose frail inconstancy has sought a vain and false belief abroad: to lure him home with soft affection, to lull him into blushes, peace, and envied happiness: one word, one tender look secures your triumph: is there no virtue, think you, in remission? Nothing persuasive in the reproach of patient love?

Lady W. I see to what your friendship wou'd persuade me; but 'were it possible my flatter'd hopes cou'd lose the memory of my wrongs for ever—Say I cou'd this moment hush my woman's pride to all the tenderness of soft affection, could sigh, could weep, and yearn for reconciliation! Where could a wretch, unheeded in her wrongs like me, find shelter? Where is the friendly bosom wou'd receive me?' How can I hope for comfort from that breast, that now I fear is hardened to my undoing?

Sir Fr. Cherish that soft'ning thought, and all may yet be well. Oh! there's a meritable goodness in those tears that cannot fail to conquer. Do not suppose, I can be partial to his errors, and not a friend to your complaints. Resentment can but at best revenge, but never redress 'em. Repose 'em with a friend for once, and be assur'd, as of my honesty, I'll make you no dishonourable peace.

Lady W.

Lady W. I don't doubt of your sincere endeavours. But who can answer for another's morals? Think how much more miserable you make me, shou'd he insult upon my patience.

Sir Fr. By that sincerity you trust in, I know him of a softer nature, friendly, generous, and tender; only to opposition, obstinately cool; to gentleness, submissive as a lover.

Lady W. Do what you will with me.

[Sits down weeping.]

Sir Fr. He comes! be comforted! Depend upon my friendship.

Enter Lord Wronglove.

My Lord, I grieve to see you here on this occasion.

Lord W. I'm not myself transported at it, Sir Friendly—I come—t'obey my summons.

Sir Fr. How easily we pay obedience to our wishes! Was it well done, my Lord, to work the weakness of a woman to ask for what you knew was her undoing? A mind, which your unkindness had distemper'd, deserv'd a tenderer care, than reaching it a corrosive for a cordial. Your judgment cou'd not but foresee, the resolution of a love-sick wife must stagger in the shock of separation.

Lord W. Ha!

[Lady Wronglove weeping.]

Sir Fr. Look there; and while these soft'ning tears reproach you, think on the long-watch'd, restless hours, she already has endur'd from your misdoing: nor cou'd you blame her, if in the torturing pain she thought her only help was cutting off the infected limb: but you! you to hold the horrid knife prepar'd, while your hard heart was conscious of a gentler cure, was cruelty beyond a humane nature.

Lord W. Mistake me not: I need not these reproaches to be just. I never sought this separation, never wish'd it; and when it can be prov'd unkind in me to accept it, my ruin shou'd as soon be welcome. And tho' perhaps my negligence of temper may have stood the frowns of love unmov'd, yet I can find no guard within, that can support me against its tears.

[Goes to Lady Wronglove.]

Sir Fr. Now, my Lord, you are indeed a man.

Lord W. Welcome or not, I must not see you thus,
Madam,

Madam, without an offer'd hand to raise you. What is't disturbs you?

Lady W. Nothing.

Lord W. If I can never more deserve that soft reception of a lover, give me at least the honest freedom of a friend's concern, to wish you well, to search your inmost griefs and share 'em,

Lady W. I cannot speak to you.

Sir Fr. My Lord, that tender silence tells you all.

Lord W. Too much indeed for sense of shame to bear:—Now, I shou'd blush ever to have deserv'd these just reproachful tears; but when I think they spring from 'the dissolving rock of' secret love, I triumph in the thought; 'and in this wild irruption of its joy, my parching heart cou'd drink the cordial dew.

'*Lady W.* What means this soft effusion in my breast! 'an aching tenderness ne'er felt before!

'*Lord W.* I cannot bear that melting eloquence of eyes. Yet nearer, closer to my heart, and live for ever there—Thus blending our dissolving souls in dumb unutterable softness.

'*Sir Fr.* Age has not yet so drain'd me, but when I see a tenderness in virtue's eye, my heart will soften and it's springs will flow.'

Lady W. Pity this new confusion of my woman's heart, that wou'd, but knows not how to make returns for this endearment; 'that fears, yet wishes, that burns and blushes, with my sex's shame in yielding'—Can you forgive, my Lord, the late uncurb'd expressions of a disorder'd mind?—But think they were my passion's fault, and pardon 'em.

Lord W. O never! never let us think we disagreed! since our sick love is heal'd, for ever be its cause forgotten, and remov'd.

Lady W. But let the kind physician that restor'd us be for ever in our thanks remembered. 'Had not his tender-care observ'd the crisis of my distemper'd mind, 'how rashly had I languish'd out a wretched being.

Lord W. This was indeed beyond a friend—a father's care.

Sir Fr. My Lord, what I have done, your mutual peace.

peace has over-paid: I knew you both had virtue, and was too far concern'd indeed to see 'em lost in passion.

Lord W. If Heaven wou'd mark our bounds of happiness below, or human wisdom were allow'd to chuse from virtue's largest store, in joys, like ours, the needless search wou'd end.

' *Sir Fr.* In such soft wives.

' *Lady W.* — So kind a husband.

' *Lord W.* — Such a friend.' [Exit.

Enter Mrs. Conquest, and Miss Notable.

Mrs. Con. I'm all amazement, all rapture, Madam, Is't possible so fair, and young a creature, can have so just, so exquisite a sense of love.

Miss Not. Why not? If I have any sense, 'tis natural to have our first views of happiness from love.

Mrs. Con. My little soul, you charm me! You have a mind to pique Lord George, you say.

Miss Not. To a rapidity!—yet, methinks, not so much upon my own account as yours; for his dishonourable usage, as I told you, of your sister. And to convince you of my friendship—there's his own hand to accuse him of it:—read it—hold! hold!—here's my uncle—put it up.

Mrs. Con. Can't I steal into your room by and by?

Miss Not. With all my heart—Then I'll tell you more. [Exit *Miss Notable.*

Enter Sir Friendly.

Sir Fr. So, child! you are making way, I see, What have you got in your hand there?

Mrs. Con. Why, young Madam tells me 'tis something under my Lord George's hand, that will convince me of his abusing my sister—me.

Sir Fr. Pray read it.

Mrs. Con. [Reads.] "To Mrs. Conquest.

"If you design to make any stay in the country, 'twill be obliging to return the lampoon you stole from me, it being the only copy from the face of this globe to the sky, that is to be had for malice or money. I am, dear Madam, with all due extremity, most invincibly yours.
BRILLIANT."

A very tender epistle truly.

Sir Fr. 'Tis like the rest of him.

Mrs. Con.

Mrs. Con. I'm glad to find, however, he has good-humour enough not to let the little malice of that chit fool him to affront me; which I find she has been heartily driving at.

Sir Fr. In troth, it shews some sense of honour in him.

Mrs. Con. Depend upon't, Sir, he does not want it upon an honourable occasion.

Sir Fr. And 'twould be hard, indeed, not to make some allowances for youth.

Mrs. Con. But if I am not even with her young ladyship—

Sir Fr. I'm glad you have so innocent a revenge in your hands; pursue your addresses to her: to make her coquetry a little ridiculous, will do her no harm. Well, how go affairs within? How is my Lady Gentle like to come off with his Lordship at play?

Mrs. Con. Just as I expected: I left her in the last game of losing about double the sum she owes him. That fellow, the Count, is certainly his confederate! his going her halves, is only a pretence to look on, and so, by private signs, to tell my Lord every card in her hand.

Sir Fr. Not unlikely. What's to be done next?

Mrs. Con. Only, Sir, do you engage the company in the next room, while I take my post. Hark! they have done play—I heard the table move: away.

Sir Fr. Success to you—— [Exeunt severally.]

The SCENE opening, discovers Lord George and Lady Gentle rising from play.

Lord Geo. Have we done, madam?

Lady Gen. I have, my Lord, and I think for ever!—please to tell that. Intolerable fortune!

[Throws down money.]

Lord Geo. The Count gone!

Lady Gen. Oh, yes, my Lord! he had not patience, you see,—He ran away when the game was scarce up.

Lord Geo. This bill is his then.

Lady Gen. It was but it's yours now, I suppose.

Lord Geo. Here's forty pounds, Madam.

Lady

Lady Gen. There's a hundred and sixty. [*Gives a bill.*]
What do I owe you now, my Lord?

Lord Geo. Forty! — a hundred and sixty! — um—just one thousand pounds, Madam.

Lady Gen. Very well! — and a thousand pounds more borrowed this morning! and all fool'd away! — fool'd! — fool'd away! [*Fretting.*]

Lord Geo. Oh! does it bite? [*Aside.*]

Lady Gen. Oh, wretch! wretch! miserable, forsaken wretch! — Ay! do! think! think! and sigh upon the consequence of what thou'st done! the ruin! ruin! the sure ruin that's before thee!

Lord Geo. Suppose, Madam, you try your fortune at some other game.

Lady Gen. Talk not of play— for I have done with it for ever.

Lord Geo. I can't see you under this confusion at your ill-fortune, Madam, without offering all within my power to make you easy.

Lady Gen. My Lord, I can't be easy under an obligation, which I have no prospect of returning.

Lord Geo. Come, come! you're not so poor, as your hard fears wou'd make you. There are a thousand trifles in your power to grant, that you wou'd never miss; yet a heart less sensible of your concern than mine, wou'd prize beyond a ten-fold value of your losses.

Lady Gen. I'm poor in every thing but folly, and a just will to answer for its miscarriages. On this, my Lord, you may depend: I'll strain my utmost to be just to you.

Lord Geo. Alas! you do not know the plenty nature has endow'd you with. There's not a tender sigh that heaves that lovely bosom, but might, if given in soft compassion to a lover's pain, release you of the Indies, had you lost 'em. 'Can you suppose, that fordid avarice alone, has push'd my fortune to this height? Was the poor lucre of a little pelf worth all this wild extravagance of hazard I have run?—Give me at least a view more generous, tho' less successful; and think, that all I've done was, in your greatest need, to prove myself your firmest friend.'

Lady Gen. My Lord, 'twou'd now be affectation not to

to understand you. ' But I'm concern'd, that you shou'd
 ' think, that fortune ever cou'd reduce me to stand the
 ' hearing of a dishonourable thought from any man ;
 ' or if I cou'd be won to folly, at least I wou'd make a
 ' gift, and not a bargain of my heart : ' therefore if the
 worst must be, I'll own the sum, and Sir William shall
 pay it on demand.

Lord Geo. [*Aside.*] Shall he ? I know what will be-
 come of your Ladyship—' You may flounce, and run
 ' away with my line, if you please ; but you will find
 ' at the end of it a lovely bearded hook, that will
 ' strangely persuade you to come back again.'—A debt of
 two thousand pounds is not so easily slipt out of.

Lady Gen. Now, my Lord, if, after all I've said, you
 have honour enough to do a handsome thing, and not let
 him know of it,

Lord Geo. Oh ! do you feel it, Madam ? [*Aside.*

Lady Gen. 'Tis but being a better housewife in pins ;
 and if a hundred pounds a quarter of that will satisfy
 you, till the whole's paid, you may depend upon't : a
 little more prudence, and a winter or two in the country,
 will soon recover it.

Lord Geo. Press me not with so unkind a thought :
 ' To drive you from the town, ere you have scarce run
 ' through half the diversions of it, wou'd be barbarous
 ' indeed.

Lady Gen. Wou'd I had never seen it !

Lord Geo. Since I see, Madam, how much you dread
 an obligation to me, say, I cou'd find the means to free
 you of this debt, without my obliging you ; nay with-
 out a possibility of your losing more : I wou'd even un-
 thank'd relieve you.

Lady Gen. That's a proposal I can't comprehend, my
 Lord.

Lord Geo. I'll make it more engaging yet : for give
 but a promise you'll weigh the offer in one moment's
 thought before you answer it ; and in return, by all my
 heart's last bleeding hopes, I swear, that even your refu-
 sal then shall silence my offensive love, and seal its lips
 for ever.

Lady Gen. I think, my Lord, on that condition, I may
 hear you.

Lord Geo.

Lord Geo. Thus then I offer—I'll tailly to you on one single card ; which if your fortune wins, the sums you owe me then shall all be quit, and my offensive hopes of love be dumb for ever : if I win, those sums shall still be paid you back, with this reserve, that I have then your silent leave to hope.

Lady Gent. My Lord——

Lord Geo. I beg you do not answer yet—Consider, first, this offer shuts out my very humblest hope from merit, is certain to recover all you've lost, with equal chance, to rid you of, I fear, a hateful lover ; and but at worst, make it your avoidless fortune to endure him.

Lady Gent. A bold and artful bait indeed ! [*Aside.*]

Lord Geo. I've done ; and leave you to the moment's pause you promis'd.

Lady Gent. [*Aside.*] A certainty to quit the sums I owe ! A chance with it, to rid me of his assaulting love ! A blest deliverance indeed ! But then the lot is equal too, of being oblig'd to give him hope, my secret, conscious leave to love—That thought imbitters all again : 'tis horrid, loathsome, and my disease less formidable than such a cure. Why do I hold it in a moment's thought ? Be bold and tell him so ; for while I pause, he hopes in spight of me—Hold—

Lord Geo. Ay ! think a little better on't. [*Aside.*]

Lady Gent. [*Aside.*] To do it rashly, may incense him to my ruin : he has it in his power. He may demand my losings of my husband's honour ! who, tho' 'twill make his fortune bleed to do't, I'm sure will pay 'em. Two thousand pounds, with what I've lately lost, might shock the measures of a larger income. What face must I appear with, then, whose shameful conduct is the cause on't ?—The consequence of that must, like an inward canker, feed upon our future quiet ! His former friendly confidence must wear a face of strangeness to me : his ease of thought, his chearful smiles, with all the thousand hoarded pleasures of his indulgent love, are lost : then lost for ever ! Insupportable dilemma ! What will become of me ?

Lord Geo. [*Aside.*] Ah ! poor lady ! it's a hard tug indeed ; but by the grace of necessity, virtue may get over it.

H

Lady Gen.

Lady Gent. [*Aside.*] If some women had this offer now, they'd make a trifle of the hazard! Nay, even of their losing it.

Lord Geo. [*Aside.*] Well said! take courage!—There's nothing in it—it's a good round sum—half ready money too—think of that—Suppose I should touch the cards a little.

Lady Gent. [*Aside.*] Hope! he hopes already, from his offer: but then he offers me the means to kill it too! Say he should win, he takes that hope but from his fortune, not my virtue! Beside—am I so sure to lose? Is't in his fate, that he must ever win? Why shall not I rather think, that Providence has brought me to this stress, only to set my follies dreadful in my view, and reaches now, at last, its hand to save and warn me on the precipice?—It must—it is—my flattering hope will have it so—Impossible so critical a chance can lose—My fancy strengthens on the thought, my heart grows bold, and bids me venture.

Lord Geo. Shall I deal, Madam?—or—

Lady Gent. Quick, quickly then, and take me while my courage can support it. [*He shuffles the cards.*] 'For—give me, Virtue, if I this once depend on fortune to relieve thee.'

Lord Geo. Now fortune for the bold—I've dealt—'Tis fix'd for one of us.

Lady Gent. There. [*She sets upon the king.*]

Lord Geo. The king!—'tis mine.

[*Lord George taillies, and Lady Gentle loses.*]

Lady Gent. Distraction!—Madness—Madness only can relieve me now.

Lord Geo. Soh! my venture is arrived at last—Now to unlade it. These bills, Madam, now are yours again. [*Lays them down.*] But why this hard, unkind concern? Be just at least, and don't in these reluctant tears, drown all the humble hopes that fortune has bequeathed me: or if they press too rude and sudden for their welcome, chide them but gently; they are soft as infant-wishes, one tender word will hush them into whispers.

Lady Gent. Thus with low submission, on my knees, I beg for pity of my fortune! Oh, save me! save me from your cruel power: pity the hard distresses of a trembling

trembling wretch, whom folly has betrayed to ruin. Oh ! think not I can ever stain my virtue, and preserve my senses ! For while I think, my shrinking heart will shudder at the horror : this trembling hand will wither in your touch, or end me in distraction. If you've a humane soul, Oh, yet be greatly good, and save me from eternal ruin !

Lord Geo. These bug-bear terrors—(Pray be raised)--

Lady Gent. Oh, never !

Lord Geo. Which inexperience forms, would vanish in a moment's just or generous thought : and since the right of fortune has decreed me hope, your word, your faith, your honour stands engaged to pay it.'

Enter a Stranger, bluntly, with a Letter.

Strang. Lady.

Lady Gent. Ah !

Lord Geo. How now ! what's the meaning of this ?

Strang. I have sworn to deliver this into your hands, though I should find you at your prayers.

Lady Gent. Who are you, Sir ?

Strang. Nobody.

Lady Gent. Whence come you ?

Strang. From nobody—Good-by. [Exit.]

Lord Geo. Fire and furies ! what a ridiculous interruption is this ?

Lady Gent. I'm amaz'd.

Lord Geo. What can it mean ?

Lady Gent. Ha ! what's here ! Bank bills of two thousand pounds ! The very sums I have lost !—No advice ! Not a line with them ! No matter whence they came ! From no enemy, I'm sure ; better owe them any where, than here.

Lord Geo. I fancy, Madam, the next room were—
were—

Lady Gent. No, my Lord—our accounts now need no privacy—there's your two thousand pounds.

Lord Geo. What mean you, Madam ?

Lady Gent. To be as you would have me, just, and pay my debts of honour : for those that you demand against my honour, by the known laws of play are void : where honour cannot win, honour can never lose. And

now, my Lord, it is time to leave my folly, and its danger—Fare you well.

Lord Geo. Hold, Madam, our short account is not made even yet: your tears indeed might fool me into pity, but this unfair defiance never can: since you would poorly falsify your word, you've nothing but your sex to guard you now; and all the favour that you now can hope, is, that I'll give your virtue even its last excuse, and force you to be just.

Lady Gent. Ah!

Enter Mrs. Conquest, with her Sword drawn.

Mrs. Con. Hold, Sir! unhand the lady.

Lord Geo. Death! again! [*Draws.*

Mrs. Con. My Lord, this is no place to use our swords in; this lady's presence may sheath them here, without dishonour. Your pardon, Madam, for this rude intrusion, which your protection, and my own injured honour, have compelled me to.

Lord Geo. Let me advise you, Sir, to have more regard to this lady's honour, than to suppose my being innocently here at cards, was upon the least ill thought against it.

Mrs. Con. My Lord, that's answered, in owning I have over-head every word you have said this half-hour.

Lord Geo. The devil! he loves her, sure! You are to be found, Sir——

Mrs. Con. Oh! my Lord, I shall not part with you; but I have first a message to you from my sister, which you must answer instantly: not but I know her pride contemns the baseness you have used her with; for which she'd think perhaps, your disappointment here an over-paid revenge: but there's a jealous honour in our family, whose injuries are above the feeble spirit of a girl to punish, that lies on me to vindicate, and calls for warmer reparation——Follow me.

Lady Gent. Good Sir!——my Lord, I beg for pity's sake, compose this breach some milder way—If blood should follow on your going hence, what must the world report of me? My fame's undone for ever—Let me intreat you, Sir, be pacified, my Lord will think of honourable

nourable means to right your sister——My Lord, for mercy's sake——

Lord Geo. Your pardon, Madam, honour must be free before it can repair: compulsion stains it into cowardice—Away, Sir—I follow you.

[*Excunt Lord George and Mrs. Conquest.*]

Lady Gent. Oh, miserable wretch! to what a fure destruction has thy folly brought thee!

Enter Sir Friendly Moral.

Sir Fr. Dear Madam, what's the matter? I heard high words within: no harm, I hope?

Lady Gent. Murder, I fear, if not prevented, my Lord George, and Sir John Conquest have quarrelled, and are gone out this moment in their heat to end it.

Sir Fr. How!

Lady Gent. I beg you, Sir, go after them; should there be mischief, the world will certainly report, from false appearances, that I'm the cause.

Sir Fr. Don't think so, Madam, I'll use my best endeavour to prevent it! In the mean time, take heed your disorder don't alarm the company within—Which way went they?

Lady Gent. That door, Sir. [*Exit Sir Friendly.*] Who's there?

Enter a Servant,

Run quick, and see if the garden-door in the park be locked—[*Exit Servant.*] How strict a guard should virtue keep upon its innocence! How dangerous, how faithless are its lawful pleasures, when habitual! This vice of play, that has, I fear, undone me, appeared at first a harmless, safe amusement; but stealing into habit, its greatest hazards grew so familiar, that even the face of ruin lost its terror to me. Oh, reflection! how I shudder at thee! the shameful memory of what I have done this night, will live with me for ever.

Re-enter Servant.

Serv. Madam, the garden-door was wide open.

Lady Gent. Did you hear no noise, or bustle in the park?

Serv. No, Madam.

[*Exit Servant.*]

Lady Gent. They're certainly gone out that way, and Sir Friendly must miss of them—Oh, wretch! wretch!

that stood't the foremost in the rank of prudent, happy wives, art now become the branded mark of infamy and shame.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE changes to the Park.

Enter Lord George.

Lord Geo. So, I think we've lost the fellows that observed us; and if my gentleman's stomach holds, now I'm at leisure to entertain him. Death! was ever glorious hope so inveterately disappointed? To bring her to the last stake, to have her fast upon my hook, nay, in my hand, and after all, to have her whip through my fingers like an eel, was the very impudence of fortune—What! not come yet! He has not thought better on't, I hope—It's a lovely clear moon—I wish it does not shine through somebody presently.

Enter four Fellows at a distance.

1st Fel. Stand close, softly, and we have him——
By your leave, Sir. [They seize him.]

Lord Geo. So! here's like to be no sport to-night then.—I'm taken care of, I see——Nay, pray gentlemen, you need not be so boisterous---I am sensible we are prevented.

2d Fel. Damn your sense, Sir. [Trips up his heels.]

1st Fel. Blood, Sir, make the least noise, I'll stick you to the ground.

Lord Geo. I beg your pardon, gentlemen, I find I am mistaken! I thought you had only come to preserve my person, but I find 'tis my purse you have a passion for---You're in the wrong pocket, upon my faith, Sir.

1st Fel. Pull off his clothes, make sure work; that's the shortest way.

Lord Geo. With submission, Sir, there's a shorter—and if you pull off my skin you won't find another sixpence in the inside on'r.

2d Fel. What's this?

Lord Geo. Only a table-book; you don't deal in paper, I presume?

1st Fel. Rot your paper, Sir, we'll trust no man! Money down's our business.

Enter

THE LADY'S LAST STAKE.

91

Enter Mrs. Conquest.

Mrs. Con. How now, gentlemen, what are you doing here?

Lord Geo. Only borrowing a little money, Sir; the gentlemen will be gone presently.

1st Fel. Hark you, you bastardy beau, get about your business—or---lay hold on him, Jack——

Mrs. Con. Me! Rascal——look you, dogs——release that gentleman, quick——Give him his sword again this minute—or—
[*Presents a pistol.*]

Lord Geo. And my money, I beseech you, Sir.

1st Fel. Blood! stand him, Jack. Five to one he don't kill. The dog has a good coat on, and may have money in his pocket.

2d Fel. Drop your pistol, Sir, or spill my blood, I'll stick you.

Mrs. Con. Do you brave me, villains---Have at you.

[*She presents, and misses fire.*]

1st Fel. Oh, ho! Mr. Bully, have we met with you?
——Come on, Sir——there, Sir, that will do, I believe.
[*Two of them secure Lord George.*]

3d Fel. What, is he down? Strip him.

[*They push, she falls.*]

2d Fel. No, rot him, he's not worth it——let's brush off.
[*Exit.*]

Lord Geo. Barbarous dogs! How is it, Sir!

Mrs. Con. I am killed—I fear the wound's quite thro' me.

Lord Geo. Mercy forbid! Where is't?

Mrs. Con. Oh! don't touch me—I beg you call for help, or any one to witness that my last words confess you guiltless of this accident.

Lord Geo. This generous reproach has more than vanquished me—I think I see a chair in the Mall——Chair, chair!—they come——Believe me, Sir, I have so just a sense of your misfortune, and your honour, that my full heart now bleeds with shame to think how grossly I have wronged you in your sister's goodness: but if you live, the future study of my life shall be with utmost reparation to deserve your friendship.

Enter Chairman.

Chair. Here: who calls chair?

Lord

Lord Geo. Here, friend, help up this gentleman, he's wounded by some foot-pads, that just now set upon us—Softly—Carry him to Sir William Gentle's in—in—

Chair. I know it very well, Sir.

[*Exeunt Chairmen with Mrs. Conquest.*]

Lord Geo. Make haste, while I run for a surgeon.—Death! how this misfortune shocks and alters me!

SCENE changes to Lady Gentle's.

Enter Miss Notable.

Miss Not. So, my plot takes, I find the family's in a terrible confusion: Sir John has certainly called him to an account for the letter I gave him. If the town does not allow me the reputation of this quarrel—I have very hard fortune. Lord! what a mortified creature will poor Mrs. Conquest, be when she hears in the lonesome country, that her own brother has fought with her only lover, for his offers of love to me? Dear soul! what must it think, when such a raw unfit thing as I, gives such a great creature as she so unexpected a confusion? She can't take it ill sure, if one should smile when one sees her next.

Enter Mrs. Hartshorn, crying.

Hart. Oh, dear Madam! sad news.

Miss Not. What's the matter?

Hart. My Lord George has killed Sir John Conquest.

Miss Not. Oh, Heavens! Upon what account? Art sure he's killed? Didst see him dead?

Hart. No, Madam, he's alive yet. They've just brought him in a hackney-chair; but they say the wound's quite through his body. Oh! 'tis a ghastly sight!

Miss Not. Malicious fortune! Had it been t'other's fate, I could have borne it. To take from me the only life I ever really loved, is insupportable.

Hart. Won't your Ladyship go in and see him, Madam?

Miss Not. Pr'ythee leave me to my griefs alone.

Hart. Ah! poor gentleman!

[*Exit.*
Miss

Miss Not. Pretty creature ! I must see him—but i shall be in an undress—it will be proper, at least, to give my concern the advantage of as much disorder as I can.

[*Exit.*

The SCENE drawing, discovers Mrs. Conquest in an armed-chair, with Lady Gentle, Lord Wronglove, Lady Wronglove, and Servants about her.

' *Mrs. Con.* No surgeon yet ?

' *Lord W.* Here's my Lord George, and I believe the surgeon with him.'

Enter Lord George, Sir Friendly and Surgeon.

Lord Geo. Come, Sir, pray be quick, there's your patient. How is it, Sir ?

Mrs. Con. Oh !

Sir Fr. 'Twas not in my fortune, Madam, to prevent this accident. [*To Lady Gent.*

Sur. By your leave, Sir—Your coat must come off, Sir.

Mrs. Con. Hold—Hark you, Sir—

[*Whispers the Surgeon.*

Sur. I am surprised indeed—A woman ! but don't be uneasy, Madam, I shall have all due regard to your sex.

Omnes. A woman !

Lord Geo. Ha !

Mrs. Con. To raise your wonder, ladies, equal to your pity, know then, I am not what I seem, the injured brother of Mrs. Conquest ; but she, herself, the feeble champion of my own despair.

Lord Geo. Distraction !

Lady Gent. Oh, my fatal folly ! what ruin art thou now the cause of ?

Lady W. Poor unhappy creature !

Lord W. What have you done, my Lord ?

Lord Geo. Oh, blind, besotted sense ! Not by a thousand pointing circumstances to fore-know this secret, and prevent its consequence ! How shall I look on her ?

Sur. No hopes indeed, Sir.

Sir Fr. Take heed—Art sure 'tis mortal ?

Sur.

Sur. Sir, 'tis impossible she can live three hours. The best way will be to convey the Lady to bed, and let her take a large dose of opium: all the helps I can give her, is the hopes of her going off in her sleep.

Lady Gent. [*Weeping.*] Oh, piteous creature!

Lord W. A heart so generous, indeed, deserved a kinder fate.

Lord Geo. [*Throwing himself at Mrs. Conquest's feet.*] Oh, pardon, injured goodness! pardon the ungrateful follies of a thoughtless wretch, that burns to be forgiven. Could I have e'er supposed your generous soul had set at half this fatal price my tenderest vows, how gladly lavish had I paid them to deserve such virtue!

Mrs. Con. My death, my Lord, is not half so terrible, as the wide wound this rash attempt must give my bleeding reputation.

Lord Geo. To cure that virgin fear, this moment I conjure you, then, before your latest breath forsakes you, let the pronouncing priest, in sacred union of our hands, unite our honour too, and in this full reduction of my vanquished heart, silence all envious questions on your fame for ever.

Mrs. Con. 'Twould be, I own, an ease in death, to give me the excuse of dying honourably yours.

Lord Geo. My Lord, your chaplain's near, I beg he may be sent for.

Lord W. This minute——

Lady W. An honourable, tho' unfortunate amends.

Mrs. Con. We have seen happier hours, my Lord; but little thought our many chearful evenings wou'd have so dark a night to end 'em.

Lady Gent. Mournful indeed!

Lord Geo. How gladly wou'd I pay down future life to purchase back one past, one fatal hour!

Mrs. Con. Is't possible!

Lord Geo. What!

Mrs. Con. The world should judge, my Lord, so widely of your heart, that only what was grossly sensual could affect it:——Now, Sir, [*To Sir Friendly.*] what think you? With all this headstrong wildness of a youthful heat, one moment's thought, you see, produces love,
compassion,

compassion, tenderness, and honour. And now, my Lord, to let you see 'twas not my interest, but innocent revenge, that made me thus turn champion to my sex's honour; since by this just exposing the weakness of your inconstancy, I have reduced you fairly to confess the power of honourable love, I thus release you of the chain: for, know, I am as well in health as ever.

[*Walks from the chair.*

Lord Geo. Ha!

[*Joyfully surprised.*

Mrs. Con. And if the darling pleasures of abandoned liberty have yet a more prevailing charm, you now again are free; return and revel in the transport.

Lord Geo. Is there a transport under heaven like this?

Lady Gent. Oh, bless'd deliverance!

Lord W. Surprising change!

Lady W. No wound nor danger then at last?

Mrs. Con. All, all, in every circumstance, I've done this night, my wound, the robbery, the surgeon, (here's one can witness) all was equally dissembled as my person.

- *Lord Geo.* Is't possible?

Lord W. The most consummate bite, my Lord, that ever happened in all the circumstances of human nature.

Lord Geo. Oh, for a strain of thought, to out-do this spiteful virtue!

Lord W. Why, faith, my Lord, 'twas smartly handsome not to cheat you into marriage, when 'twas so provokingly in her power.

Mrs. Con. If you think it worth your revenge, my Lord—Come, for once I'll give your vanity leave to humble my pride, and laugh in your turn at the notable stir I have made about you.

Lord Geo. Since you provoke me then, prepare to start and tremble at my revenge—I will not only marry thee this instant, but the next spiteful moment insolently bed thee too, and make such ravenous havock of thy beauties, that thou shalt call in vain for mercy of my power—Ho! within there! Call the chaplain.

Mrs. Con. Hold, my Lord!

Lord Geo. Nay, no resistance—By the transpotting fury thou hast raised, I'll do't.

Mrs. Con. This is downright violence—My Lord Wronglove—

[*Struggling.*
Lord

Lord W. Don't be concerned, Madam ; he never does any harm in these fits.

Mrs. Con. Have you no shame ?

Lord Geo. By earth, seas, air, and by the glorious impudence of substantial darkness, I am fixed.

Mrs. Con. Will no one help me ?—Sir Friendly !——

Sir Fr. Not I, in troth, Madam ; I think his revenge is a very honest one.

Lord Geo. Confess me victor, or expect no mercy. Not all the adamantine rocks of virgin coyness, not all your trembling, sighs, prayers, threats, promises, or tears, shall save you. Oh, transport of devouring joy !

[*Closely embracing her.*

Mrs. Con. Oh, quarter, quarter !——Oh, spare my periwig !

Lord W. Victoria, victoria ! The town's our own !

Sir Fr. Fairly won, indeed, my Lord !

Lord Geo. Sword in hand, by Jupiter. And now, Madam, I put myself into garrison for life.

Mrs. Con. Oh, that won't be long, I'm sure ! for you've almost killed me.

Lord Geo. I warrant you ; moderate exercise will bring you to your wind again.

Mrs. Con. Well, people may say what they will ; but upon some occasions, an agreeable impudence saves one a world of impertinent confusion. [Aside.

Lord Geo. And now, Madam, to let you see you have as much subdued my follies as my heart—First, let me humbly ask a pardon for offences—Here, [*To Lady Gentle.*] these fums, Madam, I now must own, to serve my shameful ends, were all unfairly won of you ; which, since I never meant to keep, I thus restore, and with 'em give a friendly warning of your too mix'd a company in play.

Lady Gent. My Lord, I thank you ; and shall henceforth study to deserve the providence that saved me—If I mistake not too, I have some bills that call for restitution. Here, [*To Mrs. Con.*] no one could, I'm sure, be more concerned to send them. Friendships concealed are double obligations. *div.*

Mrs. Con. I sent them to relieve you, Madam ; but since your danger has no farther need of them——

[*Takes the bills.*

Sir

Sir Fr. Now, child, I claim your promise—Here comes another of your small accounts that is not made up yet.

Mrs. Con. Fear not, Sir; I'll pay it to a scruple.

Enter Miss Notable weeping, in a night-dress.

Miss Not. Oh! where's this mournful sight?—Your pardon, ladies, if my intruding tears confess the weakness of a harmless passion that now 'twould be ungrateful to conceal. Had I not loved too well, this fatal accident had never been.

Mrs. Con. Well, don't be concerned, dear Madam; for the worst part of the accident is, that I am found, at last, it seems, to be no more fit for a wife, than, as I told you, you were for a husband.

Miss Not. Ha!

[*In confusion.*]

Mrs. Con. Not but I had some thoughts of marrying you too: but then I fancied you'd soon be uneasy under the cold comforts of petticoats—So—I don't know—the good company has even persuaded me to pull off my breeches, and marry Lord George.

Miss Not. Married!—Base man! is this the proof of your indifference to Mrs. Conquest? [*Aside to Lord Geo.*]

Lord Geo. 'Tis not a proof yet indeed. But I believe I shall marry her to-night; and then you know, my life, I am in a fair way to it.

Miss Not. Jeer'd by him too! I'll lock myself up in some dark room, and never see the world again. [*Exit.*]

Lady W. [*To Lord W.*] Was she, that creature then, the little wicked cause of my disquiet?—How ridiculous have you made my jealousy!—Farewel the folly and the pain.

Lord W. Farewel the cause of it for ever.

Lady Gent. [*To Sir Fr.*] The Count, you say, his accomplice! How I tremble! But I have done with it for ever. Such ruinous hazards need no second warning.

Lord Geo. I fancy, nuncle, I begin to make a very ridiculous figure here, and have given myself the air of more looseness than I have been able to come up to.

Mrs. Con. I'm afraid that's giving yourself the air of more virtue than you'll be able to come up to—But however, since I can't help it, I had as good trust you.

Lord Geo. And when I wrong that trust, may you deceive me.

Sir Fr. And now, a lasting happiness to all.

[Coming forward to the audience.]

Let those that here, as in a mirror, see

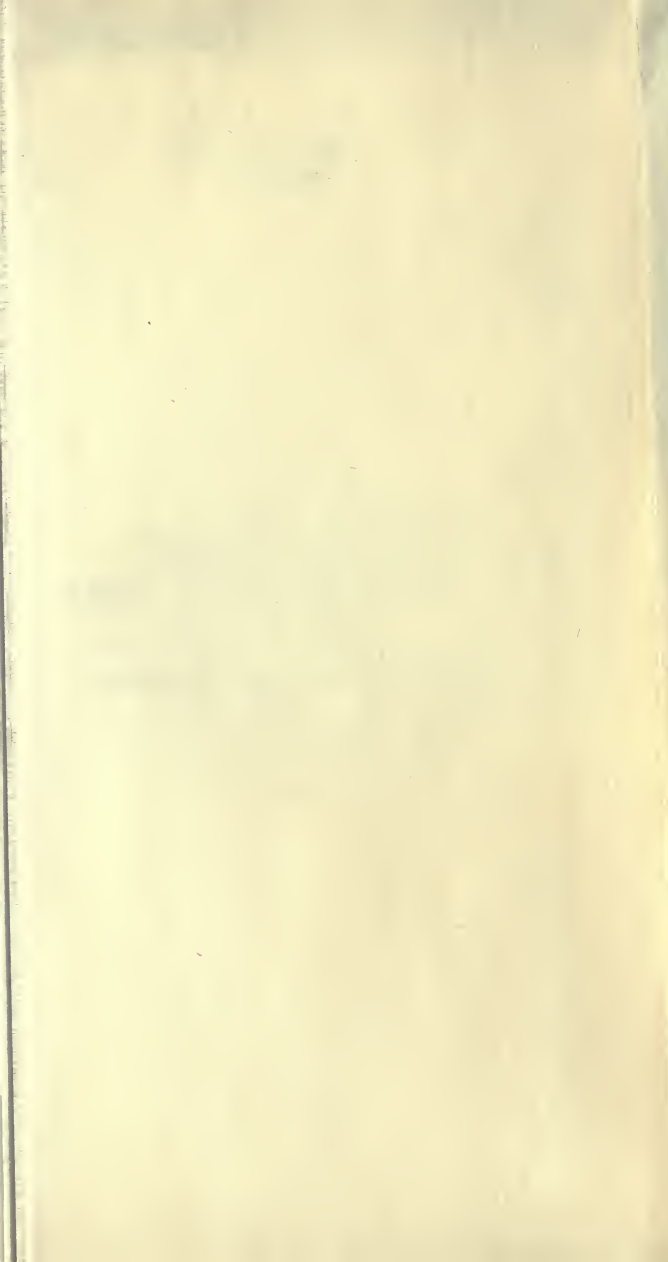
Those follies, and the dangers they have run,

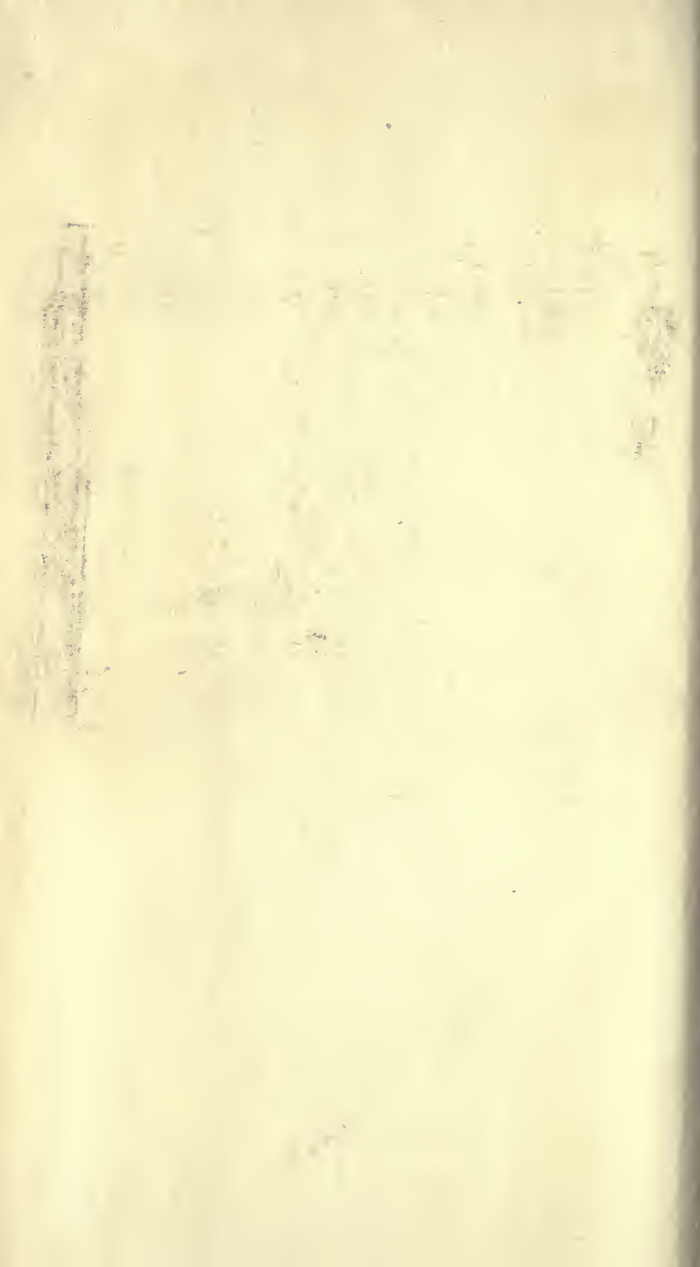
Be cheaply warn'd, and think these 'scapes their own.

[Exeunt.]

END of the FIFTH ACT.







BINDING SECT. FEB 24 1972

PR
2622
A1
1778

Jonson, Ben
Volpone

PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE
CARDS OR SLIPS FROM THIS POCKET

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO LIBRARY
